



LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE

No. CXXVI.]

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'Duty, Not Happiness, is the True Object of Life.'

WHAT COMMANDS THE ADMIRATION AND HOMAGE OF MANKIND?—CHARACTER
AND STERLING HONESTY OF PURPOSE.

THE FATHER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

AN INCIDENT IN HIS FIRST CANVASS.

'TELL 'IM TO CHALK HIS NAME ON THE COUNTER, AND YOUR FATHER SHALL ASK HIS CHARACTER.'

'If I were asked to account in a sentence for his great popularity, I should say it was his great urbanity, his fidelity to true Liberalism, his love of independence, and his unimpeachable character. During his first canvass (about 60 years ago), Mr. Villiers and two friends entered a small shop at Willenhall that had been left in charge of a young girl. On learning their business the damsel shouted upstairs, "Mother, here's a gentleman as is come for father's vote for Member of Parliament." To this a voice from above made answer, "Tell 'im to chalk his name on the counter, and your FATHER SHALL ASK HIS CHARACTER." "Thank you, Ma'am," shouted the candidate; after which, turning to his companions, he said, "Book that for me, I am as certain of it as if it were already given."—*Newcastle Chronicle*.



'BOOK THAT FOR ME.'

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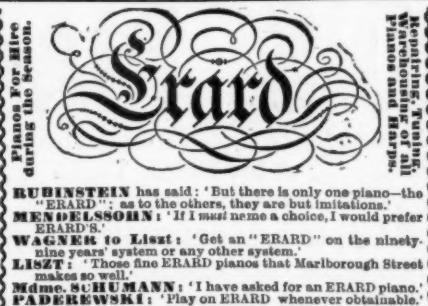
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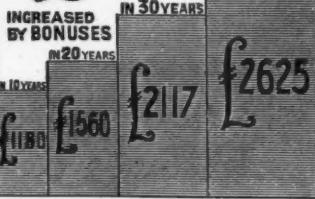
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LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE.

APRIL 1893.

A Gentleman of France:

*BEING THE MEMOIRS OF GASTON DE BONNE,
SIEUR DE MARSAC.*

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

CHAPTER X.

THE FIGHT ON THE STAIRS.

THE certainty, which this sound gave me, that I was in the right house, and that it held also the villain to whom I owed all my misfortunes—for who but Fresnoy could have furnished the broken coin which had deceived mademoiselle?—had a singularly inspiriting effect upon me. I felt every muscle in my body grow on the instant hard as steel, my eyes more keen, my ears sharper—all my senses more apt and vigorous. I stole off like a cat from the balustrade, over which I had been looking, and without a second's delay began the search for mademoiselle's room; reflecting that though the garrison now amounted to four, I had no need to despair. If I could release the prisoners without noise—which would be easy were the key in the lock—we might hope to pass through the hall by a *tour de force* of one kind or another. And a church-clock at this moment striking Five, and reminding me that we had only half an hour in which to do all and reach the horses, I was the more inclined to risk something.

The light which I had seen from below hung in a flat-bottomed lantern just beyond the head of the stairs, and outside the

entrance to one of two passages which appeared to lead to the back part of the house. Suspecting that M. de Bruhl's business had lain with mademoiselle, I guessed that the light had been placed for his convenience. With this clue and the position of the window to guide me, I fixed on a door on the right of this passage, and scarcely four paces from the head of the stairs. Before I made any sign, however, I knelt down and ascertained that there was a light in the room, and also that the key was not in the lock.

So far satisfied, I scratched on the door with my finger-nails, at first softly, then with greater force, and presently I heard someone in the room rise. I felt sure that the person, whoever it was, had taken the alarm and was listening, and putting my lips to the keyhole I whispered mademoiselle's name.

A footstep crossed the room sharply, and I heard muttering just within the door. I thought I detected two voices. But I was impatient, and, getting no answer, whispered in the same manner as before, 'Mademoiselle de la Vire, are you there?'

Still no answer. The muttering, too, had stopped, and all was still—in the room, and in the silent house. I tried again. 'It is I, Gaston de Marsac,' I said. 'Do you hear? I am come to release you.' I spoke as loudly as I dared, but most of the sound seemed to come back on me and wander in suspicious murmurings down the staircase.

This time, however, an exclamation of surprise rewarded me, and a voice, which I recognised at once as mademoiselle's, answered softly:

'What is it? Who is there?'

'Gaston de Marsac,' I answered. 'Do you need my help?'

The very brevity of her reply; the joyful sob which accompanied it, and which I detected even through the door; the wild cry of thankfulness—almost an oath—of her companion—all these assured me at once that I was welcome—welcome as I had never been before—and, so assuring me, braced me to the height of any occasion which might befall.

'Can you open the door?' I muttered. All the time I was on my knees, my attention divided between the inside of the room and the stray sounds which now and then came up to me from the hall below. 'Have you the key?'

'No; we are locked in,' mademoiselle answered.

I expected this. 'If the door is bolted inside,' I whispered, 'unfasten it, if you please.'

They answered that it was not, so bidding them stand back

a little from it, I rose and set my shoulder against it. I hoped to be able to burst it in with only one crash, which by itself, a single sound, might not alarm the men downstairs. But my weight made no impression upon the lock, and the opposite wall being too far distant to allow me to get any purchase for my feet, I presently desisted. The closeness of the door to the jambs warned me that an attempt to prise it open would be equally futile; and for a moment I stood gazing in perplexity at the solid planks, which bid fair to baffle me to the end.

The position was, indeed, one of great difficulty, nor can I now think of any way out of it better or other than that which I adopted. Against the wall near the head of the stairs I had noticed, as I came up, a stout wooden stool. I stole out and fetched this, and setting it against the opposite wall, endeavoured in this way to get sufficient purchase for my feet. The lock still held; but, as I threw my whole weight on the door, the panel against which I leaned gave way and broke inwards with a loud, crashing sound, which echoed through the empty house, and might almost have been heard in the street outside.

It reached the ears, at any rate, of the men sitting below, and I heard them troop noisily out and stand in the hall, now talking loudly, and now listening. A minute of breathless suspense followed—it seemed a long minute; and then, to my relief, they tramped back again, and I was free to return to my task. Another thrust, directed a little lower, would, I hoped, do the business; but to make this the more certain I knelt down and secured the stool firmly against the wall. As I rose after settling it, something else, without sound or warning, rose also, taking me completely by surprise—a man's head above the top stair, which, as it happened, faced me. His eyes met mine, and I knew I was discovered.

He turned and bundled downstairs again with a scared face, going so quickly that I could not have caught him if I would, or had had the wit to try. Of silence there was no longer need. In a few seconds the alarm would be raised. I had small time for thought. Laying myself bodily against the door, I heaved and pressed with all my strength; but whether I was careless in my haste, or the cause was other, the lock did not give. Instead the stool slipped, and I fell with a crash on the floor at the very moment the alarm reached the men below.

I remember that the crash of my unlucky fall seemed to release all the imprisoned noises of the house. A faint scream within the room was but a prelude, lost the next moment in the roar of dismay, the

clatter of weapons, and volley of oaths and cries and curses which, rolling up from below, echoed hollowly about me, as the startled knaves rushed to their weapons, and charged across the flags and up the staircase. I had space for one desperate effort. Picking myself up, I seized the stool by two of its legs and dashed it twice against the door, driving in the panel I had before splintered. But that was all. The lock held, and I had no time for a third blow. The men were already halfway up the stairs. In a breath almost they would be upon me. I flung down the useless stool and snatched up my sword, which lay unsheathed beside me. So far the matter had gone against us, but it was time for a change of weapons now, and the end was not yet. I sprang to the head of the stairs and stood there, my arm by my side and my point resting on the floor, in such an attitude of preparedness as I could compass at the moment.

For I had not been in the house all this time, as may well be supposed, without deciding what I would do in case of surprise, and exactly where I could best stand on the defensive. The flat bottom of the lamp which hung outside the passage threw a deep shadow on the spot immediately below it, while the light fell brightly on the steps beyond. Standing in the shadow I could reach the edge of the stairs with my point, and swing the blade freely, without fear of the balustrade ; and here I posted myself with a certain grim satisfaction as Fresnoy, with his three comrades behind him, came bounding up the last flight.

They were four to one, but I laughed to see how, not abruptly, but shamefacedly and by degrees, they came to a stand halfway up the flight, and looked at me, measuring the steps and the advantage which the light shining in their eyes gave me. Fresnoy's ugly face was rendered uglier by a great strip of plaster which marked the place where the hilt of my sword had struck him in our last encounter at Chizé ; and this and the hatred he bore to me gave a peculiar malevolence to his look. The deaf man, Matthew, whose savage stolidity had more than once excited my anger on our journey, came next to him, the two strangers whom I had seen in the hall bringing up the rear. Of the four, these last seemed the most anxious to come to blows, and had Fresnoy not barred the way with his hand we should have crossed swords without parley.

' Halt, will you ! ' he cried, with an oath, thrusting one of them back. And then to me he said, ' So, so, my friend ! It is you, is it ? '

I looked at him in silence, with a scorn which knew no bounds, and did not so much as honour him by raising my sword, though I watched him heedfully.

'What are you doing here?' he continued, with an attempt at bluster.

Still I would not answer him, or move, but stood looking down at him. After a moment of this, he grew restive, his temper being churlish and impatient at the best. Besides, I think he retained just so much of a gentleman's feelings as enabled him to understand my contempt and smart under it. He moved a step upward, his brow dark with passion.

'You beggarly son of a scarecrow!' he broke out on a sudden, adding a string of foul imprecations, 'will you speak, or are you going to wait to be spitted where you stand? If we once begin, my bantam, we shall not stop until we have done your business! If you have anything to say, say it, and——' But I omit the rest of his speech, which was foul beyond the ordinary.

Still I did not move or speak, but looked at him unwavering, though it pained me to think the women heard. He made a last attempt. 'Come, old friend,' he said, swallowing his anger again, or pretending to do so, and speaking with a vile *bonhomie* which I knew to be treacherous, 'if we come to blows we shall give you no quarter. But one chance you shall have, for the sake of old days when we followed Condé. Go! Take the chance, and go. We will let you pass, and that broken door shall be the worst of it. That is more,' he added with a curse, 'than I would do for any other man in your place, M. de Marsac.'

A sudden movement and a low exclamation in the room behind me showed that his words were heard there; and these sounds being followed immediately by a noise as of riving wood, mingled with the quick breathing of someone hard at work, I judged that the women were striving with the door—enlarging the opening it might be. I dared not look round, however, to see what progress they made, nor did I answer Fresnoy, save by the same silent contempt, but stood watching the men before me with the eye of a fencer about to engage. And I know nothing more keen, more vigilant, more steadfast than that.

It was well I did, for without signal or warning the group wavered a moment, as though retreating, and the next instant precipitated itself upon me. Fortunately, only two could engage me at once, and Fresnoy, I noticed, was not of the two who dashed forward up the steps. One of the strangers forced himself to the

front, and, taking the lead, pressed me briskly, Matthew seconding him in appearance, while really watching for an opportunity of running in and stabbing me at close quarters, a manœuvre I was not slow to detect.

That first bout lasted half a minute only. A fierce exultant joy ran through me as the steel rang and grated, and I found that I had not mistaken the strength of wrist or position. The men were mine. They hampered one another on the stairs, and fought in fetters, being unable to advance or retreat, to lunge with freedom, or give back without fear. I apprehended greater danger from Matthew than from my actual opponent, and presently, watching my opportunity, disarmed the latter by a strong parade, and sweeping Matthew's sword aside by the same movement, slashed him across the forehead ; then, drawing back a step, gave my first opponent the point. He fell in a heap on the floor, as good as dead, and Matthew, dropping his sword, staggered backwards and downwards into Fresnoy's arms.

'Bonne Foi ! France et Bonne Foi !' It seemed to me that I had not spoken, that I had plied steel in grimmest silence ; and yet the cry still rang and echoed in the roof as I lowered my point, and stood looking grimly down at them. Fresnoy's face was disfigured with rage and chagrin. They were now but two to one, for Matthew, though his wound was slight, was disabled by the blood which ran down into his eyes and blinded him. 'France et Bonne Foi !'

'Bonne Foi and good sword !' cried a voice behind me. And looking swiftly round, I saw mademoiselle's face thrust through the hole in the door. Her eyes sparkled with a fierce light, her lips were red beyond the ordinary, and her hair, loosened and thrown into disorder by her exertions, fell in thick masses about her white cheeks, and gave her the aspect of a war-witch, such as they tell of in my country of Brittany. 'Good sword !' she cried again, and clapped her hands.

'But better board, mademoiselle !' I answered gaily. Like most of the men of my province, I am commonly melancholic, but I have the habit of growing witty at such times as these. 'Now, M. Fresnoy,' I continued, 'I am waiting your convenience. Must I put on my cloak to keep myself warm ?'

He answered by a curse, and stood looking at me irresolutely. 'If you will come down,' he said.

'Send your man away and I will come,' I answered briskly. 'There is space on the landing, and a moderate light. But I

must be quick. Mademoiselle and I are due elsewhere, and we are late already.'

Still he hesitated. Still he looked at the man lying at his feet—who had stretched himself out and passed, quietly enough, a minute before—and stood dubious, the most pitiable picture of cowardice and malice—he being ordinarily a stout man—I ever saw. I called him poltroon and white-feather, and was considering whether I had not better go down to him, seeing that our time must be up, and Simon would be quitting his post, when a cry behind me caused me to turn, and I saw that mademoiselle was no longer looking through the opening in the door.

Alarmed on her behalf, as I reflected that there might be other doors to the room, and the men have other accomplices in the house, I sprang to the door to see, but had barely time to send a single glance round the interior—which showed me only that the room was still occupied—before Fresnoy, taking advantage of my movement and of my back being turned, dashed up the stairs, with his comrade at his heels, and succeeded in penning me into the narrow passage where I stood.

I had scarcely time, indeed, to turn and put myself on guard before he thrust at me. Nor was that all. The superiority in position no longer lay with me. I found myself fighting between walls close to the opening in the door, through which the light fell athwart my eyes, baffling and perplexing me. Fresnoy was not slow to see the aid this gave him, and pressed me hard and desperately; so that we played for a full minute at close quarters, thrusting and parrying, neither of us having room to use the edge, or time to utter word or prayer.

At this game we were so evenly matched that for a time the end was hard to tell. Presently, however, there came a change. My opponent's habit of wild living suited ill with a prolonged bout, and as his strength and breath failed and he began to give ground I discerned I had only to wear him out to have him at my mercy. He felt this himself, and even by that light I saw the sweat spring in great drops to his forehead, saw the terror grow in his eyes. Already I was counting him a dead man and the victory mine, when something flashed behind his blade, and his comrade's poniard, whizzing past his shoulder, struck me fairly on the chin, staggering me and hurling me back, dizzy and half-stunned uncertain what had happened to me.

Sped an inch lower it would have done its work and finished

mine. Even as it was, my hand going up as I reeled back gave Fresnoy an opening, of which he was not slow to avail himself. He sprang forward, lunging at me furiously, and would have run me through there and then, and ended the matter, had not his foot, as he advanced, caught in the stool, which still lay against the wall. He stumbled, his point missed my hip by a hair's breadth, and he himself fell all his length on the floor, his rapier breaking off short at the hilt.

His one remaining backer stayed to cast a look at him, and that was all. The man fled, and I chased him as far as the head of the stairs; where I left him, assured by the speed and agility he displayed in clearing flight after flight that I had nothing to fear from him. Fresnoy lay, apparently stunned, and completely at my mercy. I stood an instant looking down at him, in two minds whether I should not run him through. But the memory of old days, when he had played his part in more honourable fashion and shown a coarse good-fellowship in the field, held my hand; and flinging a curse at him, I turned in anxious haste to the door, the centre of all this bloodshed and commotion. The light still shone through the breach in the panel, but for some minutes—since Fresnoy's rush up the stairs, indeed—I had heard no sound from this quarter. Now, looking in with apprehensions which grew with the continuing silence, I learned the reason. The room was empty!

Such a disappointment in the moment of triumph was hard to bear. I saw myself, after all done and won, on the point of being again outwitted, distanced, it might be fooled. In frantic haste and excitement I snatched up the stool beside me, and, dashing it twice against the lock, forced it at last to yield. The door swung open, and I rushed into the room, which, abandoned by those who had so lately occupied it, presented nothing to detain me. I cast a single glance round, saw that it was squalid, low-roofed, unfurnished, a mere prison; then swiftly crossing the floor, I made for a door at the farther end, which my eye had marked from the first. A candle stood flaring and guttering on a stool, and as I passed I took it up.

Somewhat to my surprise the door yielded to my touch. In trembling haste—for what might not befall the women while I fumbled with doors or wandered in passages?—I flung it wide, and passing through it, found myself at the head of a narrow, mean staircase, leading, doubtless, to the servants' offices. At this, and seeing no hindrance before me, I took heart of grace, reflecting that mademoiselle might have escaped from the house this way.

Though it would now be too late to quit the city, I might still overtake her, and all end well. Accordingly I hurried down the stairs, shading my candle as I went from a cold draught of air which met me, and grew stronger as I descended; until reaching the bottom at last, I came abruptly upon an open door, and an old, wrinkled, shrivelled woman.

The hag screamed at sight of me, and crouched down on the floor; and doubtless, with my drawn sword, and the blood dripping from my chin and staining all the front of my doublet, I looked fierce and uncanny enough. But I felt it was no time for sensibility—I was panting to be away—and I demanded of her sternly where they were. She seemed to have lost her voice—through fear, perhaps—and for answer only stared at me stupidly; but on my handling my weapon with some readiness she so far recovered her senses as to utter two loud screams, one after the other, and point to the door beside her. I doubted her; and yet I thought in her terror she must be telling the truth, the more as I saw no other door. In any case I must risk it, so, setting the candle down on the step beside her, I passed out.

For a moment the darkness was so intense that I felt my way with my sword before me, in absolute ignorance where I was or on what my foot might next rest. I was at the mercy of anyone who chanced to be lying in wait for me; and I shivered as the cold damp wind struck my cheek and stirred my hair. But by-and-by, when I had taken two or three steps, my eyes grew accustomed to the gloom, and I made out the naked boughs of trees between myself and the sky, and guessed that I was in a garden. My left hand, touching a shrub, confirmed me in this belief, and in another moment I distinguished something like the outline of a path stretching away before me. Following it rapidly—as rapidly as I dared—I came to a corner, as it seemed to me, turned it blindly, and stopped short, peering into a curtain of solid blackness which barred my path, and overhead mingled confusedly with the dark shapes of trees. But this, too, after a brief hesitation, I made out to be a wall. Advancing to it with outstretched hands, I felt the woodwork of a door, and, groping about, lit presently on a loop of cord. I pulled at this, the door yielded, and I went out.

I found myself in a narrow, dark lane, and looking up and down discovered, what I might have guessed before, that it was the Rue d'Arcy. But mademoiselle? Fanchette? Simon? Where were they? No one was to be seen. Tormented by doubts, I lifted up my voice and called on them in turn; first on mademoiselle, then on Simon Fleix. In vain; I got no answer. High up above

me I saw, as I stood back a little, lights moving in the house I had left ; and the suspicion that, after all, the enemy had foiled me grew upon me. Somehow they had decoyed mademoiselle to another part of the house, and then the old woman had misled me !

I turned fiercely to the door, which I had left ajar, resolved to re-enter by the way I had come, and have an explanation whether or no. To my surprise—for I had not moved six paces from the door nor heard the slightest sound—I found it not only closed but bolted—bolted both at top and bottom, as I discovered on trying it.

I fell on that to kicking it furiously, desperately; partly in a tempest of rage and chagrin, partly in the hope that I might frighten the old woman, if it was she who had closed it, into opening it again. In vain, of course ; and presently I saw this and desisted, and, still in a whirl of haste and excitement, set off running towards the place where I had left Simon Fleix and the horses. It was fully six o'clock as I judged ; but some faint hope that I might find him there with mademoiselle and her woman still lingered in my mind. I reached the end of the lane, I ran to the very foot of the ramparts, I looked right and left. In vain. The place was dark, silent, deserted.

I called ‘Simon ! Simon ! Simon Fleix !’ but my only answer was the soughing of the wind in the eaves, and the slow tones of the convent-bell striking Six.

CHAPTER XI.

THE MAN AT THE DOOR.

THERE are some things, not shameful in themselves, which it shames one to remember, and among these I count the succeeding hurry and perturbation of that night : the vain search, without hope or clue, to which passion impelled me, and the stubborn persistence with which I rushed frantically from place to place long after the soberness of reason would have had me desist. There was not, it seems to me, looking back now, one street or alley, lane or court, in Blois which I did not visit again and again in my frantic wanderings ; not a beggar skulking on foot that night whom I did not hunt down and question ; not a wretched woman sleeping in arch or doorway whom I did not see and scrutinise. I returned to my mother's lodging again and again, always fruitlessly. I rushed to the stables and rushed away again, or stood

and listened in the dark, empty stalls, wondering what had happened, and torturing myself with suggestions of this or that. And everywhere, not only at the North-gate, where I interrogated the porters and found that no party resembling that which I sought had passed out, but on the *parvis* of the Cathedral, where a guard was drawn up, and in the common streets, where I burst in on one group and another with my queries, I ran the risk of suspicion and arrest, and all that might follow thereon.

It was strange indeed that I escaped arrest. The wound in my chin still bled at intervals, staining my doublet ; and as I was without my cloak, which I had left in the house in the Rue Valois, I had nothing to cover my disordered dress. I was keenly, fiercely anxious. Stray passers meeting me in the glare of a torch, or seeing me hurry by the great braziers which burned where four streets met, looked askance at me and gave me the wall ; while men in authority cried to me to stay and answer their questions. I ran from the one and the other with the same savage impatience, disregarding everything in the feverish anxiety which spurred me on and impelled me to a hundred imprudences, such as at my age I should have blushed to commit. Much of this feeling was due, no doubt, to the glimpse I had had of mademoiselle, and the fiery words she had spoken ; more, I fancy, to chagrin and anger at the manner in which the cup of success had been dashed at the last moment from my lips.

For four hours I wandered through the streets, now hot with purpose, now seeking aimlessly. It was ten o'clock when at length I gave up the search, and, worn out both in body and mind, climbed the stairs at my mother's lodgings and entered her room. An old woman sat by the fire, crooning softly to herself, while she stirred something in a black pot. My mother lay in the same heavy, deep sleep in which I had left her. I sat down opposite the nurse (who cried out at my appearance) and asked her dully for some food. When I had eaten it, sitting in a kind of stupor the while, the result partly of my late exertions, and partly of the silence which prevailed around me, I bade the woman call me if any change took place ; and then going heavily across to the garret Simon had occupied, I lay down on his pallet, and fell into a sound, dreamless sleep.

The next day and the next night I spent beside my mother, watching the life ebb fast away, and thinking with grave sorrow of her past and my future. It pained me beyond measure to see her die thus, in a garret, without proper attention or any but bare

comforts; the existence which had once been bright and prosperous ending in penury and gloom, such as my mother's love and hope and self-sacrifice little deserved. Her state grieved me sharply on my own account too, seeing that I had formed none of those familiar relations which men of my age have commonly formed, and which console them for the loss of parents and forbears; Nature so ordering it, as I have taken note, that men look forward rather than backward, and find in the ties they form with the future full compensation for the parting strands behind them. I was alone, poverty-stricken, and in middle life, seeing nothing before me except danger and hardship, and these unrelieved by hope or affection. This last adventure, too, despite all my efforts, had sunk me deeper in the mire; by increasing my enemies and alienating from me some to whom I might have turned at the worst. In one other respect also it had added to my troubles not a little; for the image of mademoiselle wandering alone and unguarded through the streets, or vainly calling on me for help, persisted in thrusting itself on my imagination when I least wanted it, and came even between my mother's patient face and me.

I was sitting beside Madame de Bonne a little after sunset on the second day, the woman who attended her being absent on an errand, when I remarked that the lamp, which had been recently lit, and stood on a stool in the middle of the room, was burning low and needed snuffing. I went to it softly, and while stooping over it, trying to improve the light, heard a slow, heavy step ascending the stairs. The house was quiet, and the sound attracted my full attention. I raised myself and stood listening, hoping that this might be the doctor, who had not been that day.

The footsteps passed the landing below, but at the first stair of the next flight the person, whoever it was, stumbled, and made a considerable noise. At that, or it might be a moment later, the step still ascending, I heard a sudden rustling behind me, and, turning quickly with a start, saw my mother sitting up in bed. Her eyes were open, and she seemed fully conscious; which she had not been for days, nor indeed since the last conversation I have recorded. But her face, though it was now sensible, was pinched and white, and so drawn with mortal fear that I believed her dying, and sprang to her, unable to construe otherwise the pitiful look in her straining eyes.

'Madame,' I said, hastily passing my arm round her, and speaking with as much encouragement as I could infuse into my voice, 'take comfort. I am here. Your son.'

'Hush!' she muttered in answer, laying her feeble hand on my wrist and continuing to look, not at me, but at the door. 'Listen, Gaston! Don't you hear? There it is again. Again!'

For a moment I thought her mind still wandered, and I shivered, having no fondness for hearing such things. Then I saw she was listening intently to the sound which had attracted my notice. The step had reached the landing by this time. The visitor, whoever it was, paused there a moment, being in darkness, and uncertain, perhaps, of the position of the door; but in a little while I heard him move forward again, my mother's fragile form, clasped as it was in my embrace, quivering with each step he took, as though his weight stirred the house. He tapped at the door.

I had thought, while I listened and wondered, of more than one whom this might be: the leech, Simon Fleix, Madame Bruhl, Fresnoy even. But as the tap came, and I felt my mother tremble in my arms, enlightenment came with it, and I pondered no more. I knew as well as if she had spoken and told me. There could be only one man whose presence had such power to terrify her, only one whose mere step, sounding through the veil, could drag her back to consciousness and fear! And that was the man who had beggared her, who had traded so long on her terrors.

I moved a little, intending to cross the floor softly, that when he opened the door he might find me face to face with him; but she detected the movement, and, love giving her strength, she clung to my wrist so fiercely that I had not the heart, knowing how slender was her hold on life and how near the brink she stood, to break from her. I constrained myself to stand still, though every muscle grew tense as a drawn bowstring, and I felt the strong rage rising in my throat and choking me as I waited for him to enter.

A log on the hearth gave way with a dull sound startling in the silence. The man tapped again, and getting no answer, for neither of us spoke, pushed the door slowly open, uttering before he showed himself the words, 'Dieu vous bénisse!' in a voice so low and smooth I shuddered at the sound. The next moment he came in and saw me, and, starting, stood at gaze, his head thrust slightly forward, his shoulders bent, his hand still on the latch, amazement and frowning spite in turn distorting his lean face. He had looked to find a weak, defenceless woman, whom he could torture and rob at his will; he saw instead a strong man armed, whose righteous anger he must have been blind indeed had he failed to read.

Strangest thing of all, we had met before! I knew him at

once—he me. He was the same Jacobin monk whom I had seen at the inn on the Claine, and who had told me the news of Guise's death !

I uttered an exclamation of surprise on making this discovery, and my mother, freed suddenly, as it seemed, from the spell of fear, which had given her unnatural strength, sank back on the bed. Her grasp relaxed, and her breath came and went with so loud a rattle that I removed my gaze from him, and bent over her, full of concern and solicitude. Our eyes met. She tried to speak, and at last gasped, ‘Not now, Gaston ! Let him—let him—’

Her lips framed the word ‘go,’ but she could not give it sound. I understood, however, and in impotent wrath I waved my hand to him to begone. When I looked up he had already obeyed me. He had seized the first opportunity to escape. The door was closed, the lamp burned steadily, and we were alone.

I gave her a little Armagnac, which stood beside the bed for such an occasion, and she revived, and presently opened her eyes. But I saw at once a great change in her. The look of fear had passed altogether from her face, and one of sorrow, yet content, had taken its place. She laid her hand in mine, and looked up at me, being too weak, as I thought, to speak. But by-and-by, when the strong spirit had done its work, she signed to me to lower my head to her mouth.

‘The King of Navarre,’ she murmured—‘you are sure, Gaston—he will retain you in your—employments?’

Her pleading eyes were so close to mine, I felt no scruples such as some might have felt, seeing her so near death ; but I answered firmly and cheerfully, ‘Madame, I am assured of it. There is no prince in Europe so trustworthy or so good to his servants.’

She sighed with infinite content, and blessed him in a feeble whisper. ‘And if you live,’ she went on, ‘you will rebuild the old house, Gaston. The walls are sound yet. And the oak in the hall was not burned. There is a chest of linen at Gil’s, and a chest with your father’s gold lace—but that is pledged,’ she added dreamily. ‘I forgot.’

‘Madame,’ I answered solemnly, ‘it shall be done—it shall be done as you wish, if the power lie with me.’

She lay for some time after that murmuring prayers, her head supported on my shoulder. I longed impatiently for the nurse to return, that I might despatch her for the leech; not

that I thought anything could be done, but for my own comfort and greater satisfaction afterwards, and that my mother might not die without some fitting attendance. The house remained quiet, however, with that impressive quietness which sobers the heart at such times, and I could not do this. And about six o'clock my mother opened her eyes again.

'This is not Marsac,' she murmured abruptly, her eyes roving from the ceiling to the wall at the foot of the bed.

'No, Madame,' I answered, leaning over her, 'you are in Blois. But I am here—Gaston, your son.'

She looked at me, a faint smile of pleasure stealing over her pinched face. 'Twelve thousand livres a year,' she whispered, rather to herself than to me, 'and an establishment, reduced a little, yet creditable, very creditable.' For a moment she seemed to be dying in my arms, but again opened her eyes quickly and looked me in the face. 'Gaston?' she said, suddenly and strangely. 'Who said Gaston? He is with the King—I have blessed him; and his days shall be long in the land!' Then, raising herself in my arms with a last effort of strength, she cried loudly, 'Way there! Way for my son, the Sieur de Marsac!'

They were her last words. When I laid her down on the bed a moment later, she was dead, and I was alone.

Madame de Bonne, my mother, was seventy at the time of her death, having survived my father eighteen years. She was Marie de Roche de Loheac, third daughter of Raoul, Sieur de Loheac, on the Vilaine, and by her great-grandmother, a daughter of Jean de Laval, was descended from the ducal family of Rohan, a relationship which in after-times, and under greatly altered circumstances, Henry Duke of Rohan condescended to acknowledge, honouring me with his friendship on more occasions than one. Her death, which I have here recorded, took place on the fourth of January, the Queen-Mother of France, Catherine de Medicis, dying a little after noon on the following day.

In Blois, as in every other town, even Paris itself, the Huguenots possessed at this time a powerful organisation; and with the aid of the surgeon, who showed me much respect in my bereavement, and exercised in my behalf all the influence which skilful and honest men of his craft invariably possess, I was able to arrange for my mother's burial in a private ground about a league beyond the walls and near the village of Chaverny. At the time of her death I had only thirty crowns in gold remaining, Simon Fleix, to whose fate I could obtain no clue, having carried

off thirty-five with the horses. The whole of this residue, however, with the exception of a handsome gratuity to the nurse and a trifle spent on my clothes, I expended on the funeral, desiring that no stain should rest on my mother's birth or my affection. Accordingly, though the ceremony was of necessity private, and indeed secret, and the mourners were few, it lacked nothing, I think, of the decency and propriety which my mother loved ; and which she preferred, I have often heard her say, to the vulgar show that is equally at the command of the noble and the farmer of taxes.

Until she was laid in her quiet resting-place I stood in constant fear of some interruption on the part either of Bruhl, whose connection with Fresnoy and the abduction I did not doubt, or of the Jacobin monk. But none came ; and nothing happening to enlighten me as to the fate of Mademoiselle de la Vire, I saw my duty clear before me. I disposed of the furniture of my mother's room, and indeed of everything which was saleable, and raised in this way enough money to buy myself a new cloak—without which I could not travel in the wintry weather—and to hire a horse. Sorry as the animal was, the dealer required security, and I had none to offer. It was only at the last moment I bethought me of the fragment of gold chain which mademoiselle had left behind her, and which, as well as my mother's rings and vinaigrette, I had kept back from the sale. This I was forced to lodge with him. Having thus, with some pain and more humiliation, provided means for the journey, I lost not an hour in beginning it. On the eighth of January I set out for Rosny, to carry the news of my ill-success and of mademoiselle's position whither I had looked a week before to carry herself.

CHAPTER XII.

MAXIMILIAN DE BETHUNE, BARON DE ROSNY.

I LOOKED to make the journey to Rosny in two days. But the heaviness of the roads and the sorry condition of my hackney hindered me so greatly that I lay the second night at Dreux, and, hearing the way was still worse between that place and my destination, began to think I should be fortunate if I reached Rosny by the following noon. The country in this part seemed devoted to

the League, the feeling increasing in violence as I approached the Seine. I heard nothing save abuse of the King of France and praise of the Guise princes, and had much ado, keeping a still tongue and riding modestly, to pass without molestation or inquiry.

Drawing near to Rosny, on the third morning, through a low marshy country covered with woods and alive with game of all kinds, I began to occupy myself with thoughts of the reception I was likely to encounter; which, I conjectured, would be none of the most pleasant. The daring and vigour of the Baron de Rosny, who had at this time the reputation of being in all parts of France at once, and the familiar terms on which he was known to live with the King of Navarre, gave me small reason to hope that he would listen with indulgence to such a tale as I had to tell. The nearer I came to the hour of telling it, indeed, the more improbable seemed some of its parts, and the more glaring my own carelessness in losing the token, and in letting mademoiselle out of my sight in such a place as Blois. I saw this so clearly now, and more clearly as the morning advanced, that I do not know that I ever anticipated anything with more fear than this explanation; which it yet seemed my duty to offer with all reasonable speed. The morning was warm, I remember; cloudy, yet not dark; the air near at hand full of moisture and very clear, with a circle of mist rising some way off, and filling the woods with blue distances. The road was deep and foundrous, and as I was obliged to leave it from time to time in order to pass the worst places, I presently began to fear that I had strayed into a by-road. After advancing some distance, in doubt whether I should persevere or turn back, I was glad to see before me a small house placed at the junction of several woodland paths. From the bush which hung over the door, and a water-trough which stood beside it, I judged the place to be an inn; and determining to get my horse fed before I went farther, I rode up to the door and rapped on it with my riding-switch.

The position of the house was so remote that I was surprised to see three or four heads thrust immediately out of a window. For a moment I thought I should have done better to have passed by; but the landlord coming out very civilly, and leading the way to a shed beside the house, I reflected that I had little to lose, and followed him. I found, as I expected, four horses tied up in the shed, the bits hanging round their necks and their girths

loosed ; while my surprise was not lessened by the arrival, before I had fastened up my own horse, of a sixth rider, who, seeing us by the shed, rode up to us, and saluted me as he dismounted.

He was a tall, strong man in the prime of youth, wearing a plain, almost mean suit of dust-coloured leather, and carrying no weapons except a hunting-knife, which hung in a sheath at his girdle. He rode a powerful silver-roan horse, and was splashed to the tops of his high untanned boots, as if he had come by the worst of paths, if by any.

He cast a shrewd glance at the landlord as he led his horse into the shed ; and I judged from his brown complexion and quick eyes that he had seen much weather and lived an out-of-door life.

He watched me somewhat curiously while I mixed the fodder for my horse ; and when I went into the house and sat down in the first room I came to, to eat a little bread-and-cheese which I had in my pouch, he joined me almost immediately. Apparently he could not stomach my poor fare, however, for after watching me for a time in silence, switching his boot with his whip the while, he called the landlord, and asked him, in a masterful way, what fresh meat he had, and particularly if he had any lean collops, or a fowl.

The fellow answered that there was nothing. His honour could have some Lisieux cheese, he added, or some stewed lentils.

' His honour does not want cheese,' the stranger answered peevishly, ' nor lentil porridge. And what is this I smell, my friend ? ' he continued, beginning suddenly to sniff with vigour. ' I swear I smell cooking.'

' It is the hind-quarter of a buck, which is cooking for the four gentlemen of the Robe ; with a collop or two to follow,' the landlord explained ; and humbly excused himself on the ground that the gentlemen had strictly engaged it for their own eating.

' What ? A whole quarter ! and a collop or two to follow ! ' the stranger retorted, smacking his lips. ' Who are they ? '

' Two advocates and their clerks from the Parliament of Paris. They have been viewing a boundary near here, and are returning this afternoon,' the landlord answered.

' No reason why they should cause a famine ! ' ejaculated the stranger with energy. ' Go to them and say a gentleman, who has ridden far, and fasted since seven this morning, requests permission to sit at their table. A quarter of venison and a collop or two among four ! ' he continued, in a tone of extreme disgust. ' It is intolerable ! And advocates ! Why, at that rate, the King

of France should eat a whole buck, and rise hungry ! Don't you agree with me, sir ?' he continued, turning on me and putting the question abruptly.

He was so comically and yet so seriously angry, and looked so closely at me as he spoke, that I hastened to say I agreed with him perfectly.

' Yet you eat cheese, sir ! ' he retorted irritably.

I saw that, notwithstanding the simplicity of his dress, he was a gentleman, and so, forbearing to take offence, I told him plainly that my purse being light I travelled rather as I could than as I would.

' Is it so ? ' he answered hastily. ' Had I known that, I would have joined you in the cheese ! After all, I would rather fast with a gentleman than feast with a churl. But it is too late now. Seeing you mix the fodder, I thought your pockets were full.'

' The nag is tired, and has done its best,' I answered.

He looked at me curiously, and as though he would say more. But the landlord returning at that moment, he turned to him instead.

' Well ! ' he said briskly. ' Is it all right ? '

' I am sorry, your honour,' the man answered, reluctantly, and with a very downcast air, ' but the gentlemen beg to be excused.'

' Zounds ! ' cried my companion roundly. ' They do, do they ? '

' They say they have no more, sir,' the landlord continued, faltering, ' than enough for themselves and a little dog they have with them.'

A shout of laughter which issued at that moment from the other room seemed to show that the quartette were making merry over my companion's request. I saw his cheek redden, and looked for an explosion of anger on his part ; but instead he stood a moment in thought in the middle of the floor, and then, much to the innkeeper's relief, pushed a stool towards me, and called for a bottle of the best wine. He pleasantly begged leave to eat a little of my cheese, which he said looked better than the Lisieux, and, filling my glass with wine, fell to as merrily as if he had never heard of the party in the other room.

I was more than a little surprised, I remember ; for I had taken him to be a passionate man, and not one to sit down under an affront. Still I said nothing, and we conversed very well together. I noticed, however, that he stopped speaking more than once, as though to listen ; but conceiving that he was merely reverting to

the party in the other room, who grew each moment more uproarious, I said nothing, and was completely taken by surprise when he rose on a sudden, and, going to the open window, leaned out, shading his eyes with his hand.

‘What is it?’ I said, preparing to follow him.

He answered by a quiet chuckle. ‘You shall see,’ he added the next instant.

I rose, and going to the window looked out over his shoulder. Three men were approaching the inn on horseback. The first, a great burly, dark-complexioned man with fierce black eyes and a feathered cap, had pistols in his holsters and a short sword by his side. The other two, with the air of servants, were stout fellows, wearing green doublets and leather breeches. All three rode good horses, while a footman led two hounds after them in a leash. On seeing us they cantered forward, the leader waving his bonnet.

‘Halt, there!’ cried my companion, lifting up his voice when they were within a stone’s throw of us. ‘Maignan!’

‘My lord?’ answered he of the feather, pulling up on the instant.

‘You will find six horses in the shed there,’ the stranger cried in a voice of command. ‘Turn out the four to the left as you go in. Give each a cut, and send it about its business!’

The man wheeled his horse before the words were well uttered, and crying obsequiously ‘that it was done,’ flung his reins to one of the other riders and disappeared in the shed, as if the order given him were the most commonplace one in the world.

The party in the other room, however, by whom all could be heard, were not slow to take the alarm. They broke into a shout of remonstrance, and one of their number, leaping from the window, asked with a very fierce air what the devil we meant. The others thrust out their faces, swollen and flushed with the wine they had drunk, and with many oaths backed up his question. Not feeling myself called upon to interfere, I prepared to see something diverting.

My companion, whose coolness surprised me, had all the air of being as little concerned as myself. He even persisted for a time in ignoring the angry lawyer, and, turning a deaf ear to all the threats and abuse with which the others assailed him, continued to look calmly at the prospect. Seeing this, and that nothing could move him, the man who had jumped through the window, and who seemed the most enterprising of the party, left us at last

and ran towards the stalls. The aspect of the two serving-men, however, who rode up grinning, and made as if they would ride him down, determined him to return; which he did, pale with fury, as the last of the four horses clattered out, and after a puzzled look round trotted off at its leisure into the forest.

On this, the man grew more violent, as I have remarked frightened men do; so that at last the stranger condescended to notice him. ‘My good sir,’ he said coolly, looking at him through the window as if he had not seen him before, ‘you annoy me. What is the matter?’

The fellow retorted with a vast amount of bluster, asking what the devil we meant by turning out his horses.

‘Only to give you and the gentlemen with you a little exercise,’ my companion answered, with grim humour, and in a severe tone strange in one so young—‘than which nothing is more wholesome after a full meal. That, and a lesson in good manners. Maignan,’ he continued, raising his voice, ‘if this person has anything more to say, answer him. He is nearer your degree than mine.’

And leaving the man to slink away like a whipped dog—for the mean are ever the first to cringe—my friend turned from the window. Meeting my eyes as he went back to his seat, he laughed. ‘Well,’ he said, ‘what do you think?’

‘That the ass in the lion’s skin is very well till it meets the lion,’ I answered.

He laughed again, and seemed pleased, as I doubt not he was. ‘Pooh, pooh!’ he said. ‘It passed the time, and I think I am quits with my gentlemen now. But I must be riding. Possibly our roads may lie for a while in the same direction, sir?’ And he looked at me irresolutely.

I answered cautiously that I was going to the town of Rosny.

‘You are not from Paris?’ he continued, still looking at me.

‘No,’ I answered. ‘I am from the South.’

‘From Blois, perhaps?’

I nodded.

‘Ah!’ he said, making no comment, which somewhat surprised me, all men at this time desiring news, and looking to Blois for it. ‘I am riding towards Rosny also. Let us be going.’

But I noticed that as we got to horse, the man he called Maignan holding his stirrup with much formality, he turned and looked at me more than once with an expression in his eye which I could not interpret; so that, being in an enemy’s country, where curiosity was a thing to be deprecated, I began to feel somewhat

uneasy. However, as he presently gave way to a fit of laughter, and seemed to be digesting his late diversion at the inn, I thought no more of it, finding him excellent company and a man of surprising information.

Notwithstanding this my spirits began to flag as I approached Rosny; and as on such occasions nothing is more trying than the well-meant rallying of a companion ignorant of our trouble, I felt rather relief than regret when he drew rein at four cross-roads a mile or so short of the town, and, announcing that here our paths separated, took a civil leave of me, and went his way with his servants.

I dismounted at an inn at the extremity of the town, and, stopping only to arrange my dress and drink a cup of wine, asked the way to the Château, which was situate, I learned, no more than a third of a mile away. I went thither on foot by way of an avenue of trees leading up to a drawbridge and gateway. The former was down, but the gates were closed, and all the formalities of a fortress in time of war were observed on my admission, though the garrison appeared to consist only of two or three serving-men and as many foresters. I had leisure after sending in my name to observe that the house was old and partly ruinous, but of great strength, covered in places with ivy, and closely surrounded by woods. A staid-looking page came presently to me, and led me up a narrow staircase to a parlour lighted by two windows, looking, one into the courtyard, the other towards the town. Here a tall man was waiting to receive me, who rose on my entrance and came forward. Judge of my surprise when I recognised my acquaintance of the afternoon! ‘M. de Rosny?’ I exclaimed, standing still and looking at him in confusion.

‘The same, sir,’ he answered, with a quiet smile. ‘You come from the King of Navarre, I believe, and on an errand to me. You may speak openly. The king has no secrets from me.’

There was something in the gravity of his demeanour as he waited for me to speak which strongly impressed me; notwithstanding that he was ten years younger than myself, and I had seen him so lately in a lighter mood. I felt that his reputation had not belied him—that here was a great man; and reflecting with despair on the inadequacy of the tale I had to tell him, I paused to consider in what terms I should begin. He soon put an end to this, however. ‘Come, sir,’ he said with impatience. ‘I have told you that you may speak out. You should have been here four days ago, as I take it. Now you are here, where is the lady?’

‘Mademoiselle de la Vire?’ I stammered, rather to gain time than with any other object.

‘Tut, tut!’ he rejoined, frowning. ‘Is there any other lady in the question? Come, sir, speak out. Where have you left her? This is no affair of gallantry,’ he continued, the harshness of his demeanour disagreeably surprising me, ‘that you need beat about the bush. The king entrusted to you a lady, who, I have no hesitation in telling you now, was in possession of certain State secrets. It is known that she escaped safely from Chizé and arrived safely at Blois. Where is she?’

‘I would to Heaven I knew, sir!’ I exclaimed in despair, feeling the painfulness of my position increased a hundredfold by his manner. ‘I wish to God I did.’

‘What is this?’ he cried in a raised voice. ‘You do not know where she is? You jest, M. de Marsac.’

‘It were a sorry jest,’ I answered, summoning up a rueful smile. And on that, plunging desperately into the story which I have here set down, I narrated the difficulties under which I had raised my escort, the manner in which I came to be robbed of the gold token, how mademoiselle was trepanned, the lucky chance by which I found her again, and the final disappointment. He listened, but listened throughout with no word of sympathy—rather with impatience, which grew at last into derisive incredulity. When I had done he asked me bluntly what I called myself.

Scarcely understanding what he meant, I repeated my name.

He answered, rudely and flatly, that it was impossible. ‘I do not believe it, sir!’ he repeated, his brow dark. ‘You are not the man. You bring neither the lady nor the token, nor anything else by which I can test your story. Nay, sir, do not scowl at me,’ he continued sharply. ‘I am the mouthpiece of the King of Navarre, to whom this matter is of the highest importance. I cannot believe that the man whom he would choose would act so. This house you prate of in Blois, for instance, and the room with the two doors? What were you doing while mademoiselle was being removed?’

‘I was engaged with the men of the house,’ I answered, striving to swallow the anger which all but choked me. ‘I did what I could. Had the door given way, all would have been well.’

He looked at me darkly. ‘That is fine talking!’ he said with a sneer. Then he dropped his eyes and seemed for a time to fall into a brown study, while I stood before him, confounded by this new view of the case, furious, yet not knowing how to vent my

fury, cut to the heart by his insults, yet without hope or prospect of redress.

'Come!' he said harshly, after two or three minutes of gloomy reflection on his part and burning humiliation on mine, 'is there anyone here who can identify you, or in any other way confirm your story, sir? Until I know how the matter stands I can do nothing.'

I shook my head in sullen shame. I might protest against his brutality and this judgment of me, but to what purpose while he sheltered himself behind his master?

'Stay!' he said presently, with an abrupt gesture of remembrance. 'I had nearly forgotten. I have some here who have been lately at the King of Navarre's Court at St. Jean d'Angely. If you still maintain that you are the M. de Marsac to whom this commission was entrusted, you will doubtless have no objection to seeing them?'

On this I felt myself placed in a most cruel dilemma. If I refused to submit my case to the proposed ordeal, I stood an impostor confessed. If I consented to see these strangers, it was probable they would not recognise me, and possible that they might deny me in terms calculated to make my position even worse, if that might be. I hesitated; but, Rosny standing inexorable before me awaiting an answer, I finally consented.

'Good!' he said curtly. 'This way, if you please. They are here. The latch is tricky. Nay, sir, it is my house.'

Obeying the stern motion of his hand, I passed before him into the next room, feeling myself more humiliated than I can tell by this reference to strangers. For a moment I could see no one. The day was waning, the room I entered was long and narrow, and illuminated only by a glowing fire. Besides I was myself, perhaps, in some embarrassment. I believed that my conductor had made a mistake, or that his guests had departed, and I turned towards him to ask for an explanation. He merely pointed onwards, however, and I advanced; whereupon a young and handsome lady, who had been seated in the shadow of the great fireplace, rose suddenly, as if startled, and stood looking at me, the glow of the burning wood falling on one side of her face and turning her hair to gold.

'Well!' M. de Rosny said, in a voice which sounded a little odd in my ears. 'You do not know madame, I think?'

I saw that she was a complete stranger to me, and bowed to her without speaking. The lady saluted me in turn ceremoniously and in silence.

'Is there no one else here who should know you?' M. de Rosny continued, in a tone almost of persiflage, and with the same change in his voice which had struck me before; but now it was more marked. 'If not, M. de Marsac, I am afraid—— But first look round, look round, sir; I would not judge any man hastily.'

He laid his hand on my shoulder as he finished in a manner so familiar and so utterly at variance with his former bearing that I doubted if I heard or felt aright. Yet I looked mechanically at the lady, and seeing that her eyes glistened in the firelight, and that she gazed at me very kindly, I wondered still more; falling, indeed, into a very confusion of amazement. This was not lessened but augmented a hundredfold when, turning in obedience to the pressure of de Rosny's hand, I saw beside me, as if she had risen from the floor, another lady—no other than Mademoiselle de la Vire herself! She had that moment stepped out of the shadow of the great fireplace, which had hitherto hidden her, and stood before me curtseying prettily, with the same look on her face and in her eyes which madame's wore.

'Mademoiselle!' I muttered, unable to take my eyes from her.

'Mais oui, monsieur, mademoiselle,' she answered, curtseying lower, with the air of a child rather than a woman.

'Here?' I stammered, my mouth open, my eyes staring.

'Here, sir—thanks to the valour of a brave man,' she answered, speaking in a voice so low I scarcely heard her. And then, dropping her eyes, she stepped back into the shadow, as if either she had said too much already, or doubted her composure were she to say more. She was so radiantly dressed, she looked in the firelight more like a fairy than a woman, being of small and delicate proportions; and she seemed in my eyes so different a person, particularly in respect of the softened expression of her features, from the Mademoiselle de la Vire whom I had known and seen plunged in sloughs and bent to the saddle with fatigue, that I doubted still if I had seen aright, and was as far from enlightenment as before.

It was M. de Rosny himself who relieved me from the embarrassment I was suffering. He embraced me in the most kind and obliging manner, and this more than once; begging me to pardon the deception he had practised upon me, and to which he had been impelled partly by the odd nature of our introduction at the inn, and partly by his desire to enhance the joyful surprise he had in store for me. 'Come,' he said presently, drawing me to the window, 'let me show you some more of your old friends.'

I looked out, and saw below me in the courtyard my three horses drawn up in a row, the Cid being bestrid by Simon Fleix, who, seeing me, waved a triumphant greeting. A groom stood at the head of each horse, and on either side was a man with a torch. My companion laughed gleefully. ‘It was Maignan’s arrangement,’ he said. ‘He has a quaint taste in such things.’

After greeting Simon Fleix a hundred times, I turned back into the room, and, my heart overflowing with gratitude and wonder, I begged M. de Rosny to acquaint me with the details of mademoiselle’s escape.

‘It was the most simple thing in the world,’ he said, taking me by the hand and leading me back to the hearth. ‘While you were engaged with the rascals, the old woman who daily brought mademoiselle’s food grew alarmed at the uproar, and came into the room to learn what it was. Mademoiselle, unable to help you, and uncertain of your success, thought the opportunity too good to be lost. She forced the old woman to show her and her maid the way out through the garden. This done, they ran down a lane, as I understand, and came immediately upon the lad with the horses, who recognised them and helped them to mount. They waited some minutes for you, and then rode off.’

‘But I inquired at the gate,’ I said.

‘At which gate?’ inquired M. de Rosny, smiling.

‘The North-gate, of course,’ I answered.

‘Just so,’ he rejoined with a nod. ‘But they went out through the West-gate and made a circuit. He is a strange lad, that of yours below there. He has a head on his shoulder, M. de Marsac. Well, two leagues outside the town they halted, scarcely knowing how to proceed. By good fortune, however, a horse-dealer of my acquaintance was at the inn. He knew Mademoiselle de la Vire, and, hearing whither she was bound, brought her hither without let or hindrance.’

‘Was he a Norman?’ I asked.

M. de Rosny nodded, smiling at me shrewdly. ‘Yes,’ he said, ‘he told me much about you. And now let me introduce you to my wife, Madame de Rosny.’

He led me up to the lady who had risen at my entrance, and who now welcomed me as kindly as she had before looked on me, paying me many pleasant compliments. I gazed at her with interest, having heard much of her beauty and of the strange manner in which M. de Rosny, being enamoured of two young

ladies, and chancing upon both while lodging in different apartments at an inn, had decided which he should visit and make his wife. He appeared to read what was in my mind, for as I bowed before her, thanking her for the obliging things which she had uttered, and which for ever bound me to her service, he gaily pinched her ear, and said, ‘When you want a good wife, M. de Marsac, be sure you turn to the right.’

He spoke in jest, and having his own case only in his mind. But I, looking mechanically in the direction he indicated, saw mademoiselle standing a pace or two to my right in the shadow of the great chimney-piece. I know not whether she frowned more or blushed more; but this for certain, that she answered my look with one of sharp displeasure, and, turning her back on me, swept quickly from the room, with no trace in her bearing of that late tenderness and gratitude which I had remarked.

(*To be continued.*)

General Kukúshka.¹

KUKUSHKA calls, ‘The spring is here,
 The winter’s gone, the summer’s near.’
 The mellow message everywhere
 Swells the last breath of April air ;
 The heights of Oural catch the word,
 And Baikál’s sleeping heart is stirred ;
 O'er ice-locked steppe and frozen fen
 It thrills to sad Saghalien ;
 By Neva’s bank and Yeniséi
 ‘Tis flung back from each tinkling sleigh ;
 And round each steaming sámovár,
 Throughout the empire of the Czar,
 In tent and hut and palace-hall,
 There’s rapture at Kukúshka’s call.

Kukúshka calls—the exile hears,
 And turns to hide his starting tears.
 The foul air of his dungeon seems
 One moment purified, in dreams,
 One moment—and, in fancy, he
 Can breathe as only breathe the free.
 Or stiff’ning from Kará’s bleak mine,
 That rich note warms him as with wine.
 He’ll chafe no more beneath the chain,
 No more he’ll brook a slave’s disdain;

¹ The cry of the bird is taken as an evidence that an escaped convict can once more live in the forests ; and to run away, in convict slang, is to ‘go to General Kukúshka for orders.’—Kennan’s *Siberia and the Exile System*.

Better to die by scourge or shot
 Than hear that voice and heed it not.
 A dastard he whom death appals
 When General Kukúshka calls.

Kukúshka calls, but not to all
 Comes comfort at Kukúshka's call.
 Across the misty leagues of snow
 Behold the chain-gang wending slow—
 Cling-clang, cling-clang—with stumbling tread,
 And eyes of death, and limbs of lead,
 Like beasts that know the drover's goad,
 Silent they stagger on their road :
 Or should some pitying ear avail,
 Break forth in melancholy wail :

' We are driven from the city
 To the wilderness ;
 Little Father, have compassion
 On our sore distress.

' We are footsore, we are weary,
 We have come from far ;
 We are broken by the anger
 Of our Lord the Czar.

' You have wives and little children,
 We have lost them long ;
 By the love that we must forfeit,
 Hear our begging-song.¹

' We are very cold and hungry,
 Spare a little bread ;
 If you will not have compassion
 We shall soon be dead.

¹ For the ' Begging-song,' cf. Kennan's *Siberia*.

GENERAL KUKUSHKA.

'We are on the road to bondage
In the sunless mine ;
We are fainting—of your plenty
Spare a little wine.'

'We are very sorrowful,
Help us on our way ;
Turn not from us, Little Father,
Pity us, we pray.'

So wailing, o'er the waste of snow,
The chain-gang passes row by row ;
And row by row they still prolong
Their melancholy begging-song,
Till lost to eye and ear again,
They're swallowed by the deathlike plain.

• • • • •
In vain, O bird of mellow throat,
For these thy resurrection-note ;
As ashes on the coffin fall,
So sounds for them Kukúshka's call.

A. H. BEESLY.

*The
Fairchild Family and their Creator.*

WE are never so much tempted to question the doctrine of the Survival of the Fittest as when, after the lapse of nearly thirty years, we rise up from a fresh reading of *The Fairchild Family*. Why has this book been a classic of the nursery for more than half a century, while others, which surely can have been no whit inferior, have long been forgotten? What is it that makes the incidents in the daily life of these intolerable children and their yet more intolerable parents stick in our minds, while far more exciting adventures have failed to take root there? This article does not pretend to solve the problem, for the writer is as much puzzled, after the most earnest consideration, as anyone else; but a short analysis of the teaching and tendency of the book may illuminate the topic for others.

The theory of education set forth by Mrs. Sherwood in *The Fairchild Family* is very much the same as that inculcated by Madame de Genlis in *Adèle et Théodore*, and depends not only on the complete isolation of the children, but also on the fact that they are the one and only care of all about them. The wholesome neglect which obliges young people to shift for themselves, and forces them to invent their own games, and to develop their own characters, was as foreign to Mrs. Sherwood's ideal system of education as it is, in another sense, to that at present in vogue. Of course, children are now allowed infinitely more freedom than when *The Fairchild Family* was written. They are encouraged to form their own plans and permitted to do as they like, but they are quite as much the one centre of everybody's attention, the axis round which the wheel of life revolves, as in the days when Lucy and Emily asked leave before they took a stroll in the garden, or made a frock for their doll.

It seems very strange, considering the numerous proofs which Mr. and Mrs. Fairchild had of the failure of their teaching,

that they did not try some other method. Time after time, the moment the children were left to their own devices, they disobeyed every order that had ever been given them, and ran counter to the religious principles impressed on them by their parents at every hour of the day. They were so much accustomed to go about in a moral leash that they were absolutely incapable of running without it. They themselves were so conscious of this that they were only at ease in the presence of someone who could be trusted to pull them up when necessary, and on one occasion, when they all three went out to spend the day, Lucy begged her friend's governess to tell them everything they did wrong, adding, 'We wish to behave well, but sometimes we do not.' Most children would hardly think these inspiriting conditions under which to pass a holiday, but the young Fairchilds are aware that it is their only chance of bringing back a good character at night. And if they don't! Their parents, too, are quite as clear as the children about the instability of the principles which had been so carefully and incessantly taught. Indeed, they would probably have considered it wicked to imagine that the children could be trusted to their own instincts, and that the lessons of years might bear fruit. They shudder at the thought of a wild, good-natured, harum-scarum girl coming on a few days' visit, fearing that she may work irreparable harm; they warn the children not to imitate her, and forbid Henry, as being the youngest and most easily led, to remain for a moment in the same room alone with her. It never occurs to the worthy Mrs. Fairchild that, in spite of the texts in which she wraps up her discourses, she is teaching her children to be self-righteous, and giving them a sense of moral superiority which is more fatal to real goodness than any amount of thoughtless scrapes could be. Already Lucy, at nine, fears 'that there are very few real Christians in the world, and that a very great part of the human race will be finally lost,' and makes the cheering proposal to 'say some verses about mankind having bad hearts;' and her brother and sister, in order to show that they are in no degree behind in theology, each quote a text to prove that 'the nature of man, after the fall of Adam, is utterly and entirely sinful.' They are so much concerned with the dogmatic parts of the Bible that they overlook completely its moral training, and absolutely ignore the truth that its most shining examples of greatness have been allowed scope to develop their own natures, and to rise upon their falls. To put the case in a nutshell: The Bible's theory of education includes the necessity

of experience; Mrs. Fairchild's the obligation of dispensing with it.

One might have thought that the danger of self-consciousness arising from these perpetual religious conversations would have become obvious to the feeblest mind, but both parents appear to have regarded this unlucky habit as an evidence of grace. The children are eternally watching themselves, probing themselves, writing down their bad thoughts, talking about themselves. It is Self, Self, Self from morning till night, and the more they talk about Self the more delighted their parents are. Now, it is a well-known fact that many people—and children—would rather tell stories to their own disadvantage than not speak of themselves at all. It is perhaps also a fact, though not such a well-known one, that if people—and children—could forget themselves altogether, even if they sometimes forgot their faults too, both they and the world would be considerably the better. Nothing is so fatal to well-doing or well-being as the perpetual contemplation of self. But Mrs. Fairchild would consider these remarks rank heresy.

The good lady's notions of secular education were nearly as singular as her religious ideas, and they are all the more odd as Mrs. Sherwood herself had an excellent education, and was accustomed to mix in good and cultivated society. When the story opens the three children range from nine to six and a half, and a period of 'some years' is supposed to elapse before the close. At eight and nine 'Lucy and Emily learned to read and to do various kinds of needlework, and Lucy had begun to write.' 'Mr. Fairchild taught Henry all that was proper for a little boy in his station to learn.' This does not seem to have included a great variety of subjects, but about a year later, Henry having in an unguarded moment expressed a wish to be a clergyman—he was then between seven and eight—an attempt was made to introduce him to the Latin language. The formidable array of books necessary for this purpose impressed Henry with a sense of importance, but he soon found that 'he could not learn his Latin grammar and play with the hare too half the morning, as he used to do when he had only spelling and a verse from the Bible to learn every day.' Then follows one of the most gallant attempts at resistance recorded in history. Henry absolutely refused to commit to memory one single word! It was not, as he explained to his friend John, the factotum of the establishment, that he could not learn it, but that if he learnt one word he should be

made to learn the next, and so on throughout the book. It was, he knew, the thin end of the wedge, and for three days he suffered ostracism and horsewhipping and starvation sooner than admit it. It was like the Revolt of the Netherlands. Henry was lashed, put under an interdict, and confined to bread and water. At last the interdict prevailed.

Certainly any acquaintance with 'contagious countries' does not appear to have been included by Mrs. Fairchild in 'the knowledge that becomes a young woman,' for we find Lucy at nine years old having the four continents explained to her, and a year later inquiring where Paris was. A vague future is referred to as a time 'when they will be old enough to read history,' although each of them is held to be sufficiently advanced to teach in the Sunday school. It is curious, too, that though they are considered far too giddy ever to look after themselves—even Henry, at nine or ten, is nearly drowned in a pail of pig's wash, and has to sit in the maid's presence for the rest of the day—Lucy and Emily are allowed to dress themselves with the exception of a 'complete wash on Saturday nights.' Henry, however, on the mournful occasion referred to, still requires to have his clothes fastened, and in the absence of his parents is ordered to sleep in the same room as John. To make up for the lack of worldly instruction, it was Mr. Fairchild's habit to give a singular sort of object-lesson to his family, whenever the opportunity permitted. He seized the excuse afforded him by a childish quarrel between Lucy and Emily to escort them all three to a wood, a short distance off, where the body of a man was still hanging from a gibbet. He then insisted on sitting down close under the gibbet, with its rattling burden, and giving them the whole history of the bones that were swinging above their heads, and of the envy and jealousy that had finally placed them there; not omitting to observe that the mother of the murderer had kept an 'excellent table,' though this detail does not seem to have had any important bearing on the affair. Not long after this ghastly episode follows another, still more revolting. An old man in the village dies, and Mr. Fairchild remarks to his children, 'Have you any desire to see the corpse, my dears? You never saw a corpse, I think.' To which Lucy answers, 'No, papa; but we have a great curiosity to see one.' Accordingly, after summoning Lucy and Emily to repeat all the texts they could remember about death, they proceed to the cottage, and are invited in. 'When they came to the door, they perceived a kind of disagreeable smell, such as they had never

smelt before ; this was the smell of the corpse, which, having been dead now nearly two days, had begun to corrupt.' It is incredible that any man should voluntarily have exposed children to such an ordeal ; still more that he should have kept them there a considerable time while he talked and prayed. It is a wonder they were not made physically ill, or else frightened into fits ; but the family were unusually stolid, and nothing created much impression on them that did not immediately touch themselves.

The natural and inevitable result of the self-righteous manner cultivated by the Fairchilds was a certain degree of snobbishness in the way they regarded the outside world. The utter depravity of the human heart, which formed the staple subject of their conversation, did not prevent them from having very strict ideas in the matter of rank and equality. Mr. Fairchild was the son of a squire with a large estate near Reading, to which, in Part III., the whole family ultimately remove. He had originally been intended for a clergyman, but his health had afterwards prevented his taking orders. There was no reason, therefore, why he and his children should not have been fitted to associate on equal terms with their neighbours, as far as their small income would allow them so to do ; but, in spite of all their talk, it was not the habit of either Mr. or Mrs. Fairchild to take the obvious and simple view of anything. They accept twice a year, for themselves and their children, the invitation of some purse-proud people, Sir Charles and Lady Noble, to spend a long day at the Hall, although they all appear to be treated with neglect, and even positive rudeness, by the hostess and her guests. The 'wish to avoid a quarrel' does not seem a sufficient excuse for submitting to this treatment, but, to be sure, they all had the pleasure during the long hours of the day of contrasting themselves with their hosts, and of discussing their shortcomings on the drive home—in the Nobles' own carriage ! These Nobles were the Helots of the Fairchild family, and were always at hand to point a moral or to serve as texts for a lesson on ambition, self-will, or some other bad quality. This is not an uncommon state of things. Many families have acquaintances who have apparently been created to fill this office, and when self-conceit is in danger of tottering from some of the hard knocks of life, it is an ineffable comfort to have it set firmly-on its feet again by a glance at some one or other whose manners and words may fairly be considered worse than our own.

As far as can be gathered, the only standard by which the

Fairchilds measured worldly superiority was a monetary one ; at least, nothing is said to prove that Miss Darwell (whose parents succeeded the Nobles at the Hall) was any better born than the Fairchilds themselves. Yet it is expressly said that it 'is sweet when persons of higher rank take thought for the small comforts of those below them'—she had sent her pony-carriage for the children—and also that her governess had 'directed her how to show those little attentions which make inferiors happy with superiors.' The account of this visit, by the way, is one of the strangest episodes in the book, and the reader has a series of shocks from the moment he attends them to the carriage. First, there is the servant : Mrs. Sherwood's servants are as extinct as the dodo, only it is not so certain that they ever existed. Well, the servant who drives the pony-carriage at once opens the conversation with praise of Miss Darwell, and goes on to remark that Henry and his sisters are much favoured. To which Lucy, in her best and most characteristic manner, rejoins, 'Not us, sir ; but our papa and mamma, because they have taken pains with us ; and I do hope that we shall behave well, for we have never been out quite alone before.' The coachman, with more elegance of language than is usual in his class, replies to this pious aspiration that 'Mrs. Colvin' (Miss Darwell's governess) 'is as worthy a lady as ever stepped ; so that the best thing you can do is, for this day, to place yourselves under her command, and if she guides you as she has done Miss Darwell, you won't come to any disgrace.' This being satisfactorily settled, and Lucy having taken the earliest opportunity to request that their errors might be pointed out to them, they begin to play. But even in the company of the well-brought-up Miss Darwell, they are not suffered to remain alone. Mrs. Colvin tells them to leave the door open, as she knows 'they think it comfortable to have a person watching them, though it is to find fault.' In the evening a *fête champêtre* was arranged, at which a poor family was present who had been helped by the Fairchilds. They express their gratitude, and are corrected promptly by the ever-ready Lucy with the words, 'We must thank God, little boy, when He sends us good friends.'

Not long after this Mr. Fairchild comes into the family property, on the death of his niece, and they all remove to a country house near Reading. This neighbourhood was very familiar to Mrs. Sherwood, as she had passed some time at a French school there, and had happy recollections of balls and plays and talks with the French *émigrés* of high rank whom the Revolution had driven across the sea.

None of these joys, however, were destined to be the portion of the Fairfield family. They would have contemplated them all with horror, and it is not to be expected that their society would have been very eagerly sought by the neighbours. It is true that we do not follow their fortunes very long after their accession to wealth, but they do not appear to be adapting themselves very gracefully to their change of circumstances. Indeed, Mrs. Fairchild, who never conveys the impression of being a lady, shows rather unfavourably under the new *régime*. She at once forbids her children, when they are arranging their schoolroom, to fetch what they want themselves, as had hitherto been their habit, but orders them always to ring for their maid. She likewise enjoins upon Lucy and Emily the necessity of concealing from the stuck-up lady's maid the fact of their having made their beds, which had been another daily duty in their old home—a line of conduct that is truly surprising in a person so happily convinced of her own superiority.

With every desire to make allowance for the difference of custom, it must be conceded that *The Fairchild Family* is not profitable reading for children. A book more calculated to produce an effect really opposite to that intended by the author cannot possibly be conceived. Indeed, the very sins that the children are guilty of are not those to which their training would have tended ; and, as is the case with any book written for a purpose, every event happens, as it must, for the sake of the story, and not as it would naturally have befallen. There is a total want of perspective throughout, and everything assumes precisely the same proportion. It is amazing how Mrs. Sherwood, who had seen life and the world, and was always surrounded by a bevy of children, both her own and adopted ones, should have imagined that it was either possible or desirable to bring them up like the Fairchilds. No subject was ever too sacred to be broached to the first-comer, and they all give utterance to the profoundest truths with a glibness that is shocking to the reader's feelings. It is a very great misfortune when it becomes a family habit to discuss everything till it is dry ; and roots that are perpetually being taken up to see how they are growing will never strike. Eyes and thoughts that are constantly bent earthwards, even though the object of contemplation is our own fallen nature, will never learn to soar ; and if, instead of quoting verses about 'mankind having bad hearts,' the children had been taught a few about 'the fruits of the spirit,' they would have been happier themselves, and not so much addicted to 'the pride that apes humility.'

If, after reading *The Fairchild Family*, *Little Henry and his Bearer*, *Roxobel*, *Juliana Oakley*, and the rest of Mrs. Sherwood's books for children, we had been asked to guess the social status of the person who wrote them, the shot would certainly have gone very wide of the mark. To nine people out of ten these stories, all drawn on the same lines, would have seemed the work of a pious old maid, dwelling in some remote country village, fonder of visiting the poor than of mixing with her equals, with little education and narrower sympathies. This would have been almost as far from the truth as the conjecture of the reviewer of *In Memoriam*, that 'these religious poems were apparently written by the widow of a military man'! Mrs. Sherwood came of an old English family, and could trace her genealogy back to the days of Poitiers. Her grandfather, Mr. Butt, lived in Lichfield, where, in 1741, her father was born. There he and his brothers used to play with and make game of Samuel Johnson, and one day, when their father happened to detect them good-naturedly chaffing the big clumsy fellow, he shook his head and remarked, 'Ah! you call him the Great Boy, do you, but, take my word for it, you will live to call him the Great Man!'

Johnson was not the only celebrated person with whom the young Butts mixed in early days. No better or more varied society could be found anywhere than in the little country town which contained Darwin, Miss Seward, young, handsome, vain, and talkative ; Mr. Edgeworth and his daughter Maria ; Dr. Day, the author of *Sandford and Merton* ; Garrick's brother, and not infrequently Garrick himself. Among all these distinguished people Mrs. Sherwood's father was well able to bear his part. His conversation was excellent, his manners charming—in later years he was made Court Chaplain to George III.—and his mind was well cultivated. After fixing his affections on the lovely Mary Woodhouse, who died young, he accepted a wife of his father's choosing, and married Mary's cousin. Outwardly the contrast between the two ladies was great, for the new Mrs. Butt was a plain little creature, but she was a good woman and a great reader, as reading was understood in those days. It is recorded of her that once, as she was walking in the Close at Lichfield reading *Rasselas*, Dr. Johnson met her, and, seeing how she was employed, seized the book in a fit of nervousness, and flung it among the tombs.

In 1771 Mr Butt was presented to the living of Stanfold, in Worcestershire, a lovely place, with pleasant and well-bred neigh-

hours, and there, four years later, Martha Mary was born. Her autobiography is a very interesting book, and her own life is far more instructive and admirable than any of the fictitious biographies by which she set so much store. Of course, she and her brothers and sisters were kept very strictly in certain ways, as children were in those days ; but they thought nothing of it, and it did not interfere with their enjoyment. Their food was very plain, consisting often merely of dry bread and milk. They never sat down in their mother's presence, or were suffered to come near a fire ; neither were they allowed to talk much before their elders. They were forced to listen to general conversation, and in this way early got ideas of men and things which they would not have been likely to gather from books. Still, this *régime* in no way affected their relations with their parents. Martha was no more than five when she first began to make up stories, and, as she could not write herself, used to run about after her mother with a slate and pencil to get her ideas put down. Before she was seven her father shut her and her brother Martin up in a room, to see which could write the best story ; and two years later she is to be found reading romances to her sister Lucy, about fairies, enchanters, gods, and goddesses, while they all acted scenes out of *Robinson Crusoe*, and were acquainted with *Aesop*. How much Mrs. Fairchild would have had to say about this sinful waste of time, and what texts Lucy would have quoted as to the vanity of worldly knowledge !

Mr. and Mrs. Butt, however, had no such qualms. They taught Martha Latin at the same time as her brother, and encouraged her to read at eight the *Tatler*, and afterwards the *Spectator*, the *Arcadia*, and some old romances. From six to thirteen the little girl did her lessons standing in stocks, with a backboard across her shoulders, and wore an iron collar from morning till night, but whether for mental or physical discipline she does not say. However, this was taken as a matter of course, and did not by any means affect her spirits. As to their religious education, it was carefully seen to by their parents, genuinely good and earnest people, who suffered their faith and principles to speak silently for themselves, instead of perpetually holding them up to admiration. The children's Christianity seems to have been rather of a militant kind, to judge by the performance of Lucy, Martha's younger sister. A boy of her own age, who embodied in his small person some of the atheistic tendencies of the time, once informed Miss Lucy that he did not believe that

there ever was a man called Jesus Christ. ‘Don’t you?’ she said succinctly, and knocked him down and then beat him. We are not told if the boy was converted by arguments in the manner of St. Louis.

In 1788 Mr. Butt was appointed Vicar of Kidderminster, and thither the family moved, leaving Stanford and its pleasant county society with the deepest regret. At this time Martha was a girl of thirteen, fond of dolls, and very shy and awkward. She seems to have been nice-looking, with quantities of hair, but, like many girls of her age, not very particular about her clothes. Indeed, she tells us how Plumptre, the Dean of Gloucester, used to admonish her to pull up her shoes, with the regularity that recalls Captain Wragge to our minds. The engraving from the picture taken of her in later life shows her to be a woman with a handsome face, and a very agreeable, sensible expression.

At fifteen (1790) Martha was sent to a French school near Reading, where she had a very gay time, and saw a good deal of the best French society in the *émigrés* then crowding over from France, besides mixing with the family of her father’s old friend Dr. Valpy, and becoming acquainted with Dr. Mitford and his daughter Mary, then four years old. The school appears to have been conducted to a certain extent on the principles affected in France, and included in the curriculum dancing, acting, and the art of making oneself agreeable. One of her vacations was passed by Martha with some friends in London, when she danced every day for a fortnight, and was lucky enough to see Mrs. Siddons and Kemble in *Macbeth*.

Martha Butt really *was* only seventeen—the supposed and ideal age of all successful authoresses—when she produced her first published work, *The Traditions*. Unlike most young people, she had no desire to rush into print, for she had always had ‘a horror of being thought a literary lady,’ while at the first word of publication one of her relations comes to represent forcibly to her parents ‘the vast amount of evil which would be done’ to the girl, in the very bloom of her life, ‘by dragging her before the public.’ Martha’s father, however, was more sensible or less sensitive; besides, he had his reasons. A friend of his own stood greatly in need of money, and it was proposed that the profits accruing from Martha’s pen should be entirely devoted to his benefit. She never tells us whether she herself had any voice in the matter, but, at any rate, a sufficiently large sum was obtained to set this poor man—who seems to have been an *émigré* of high

birth and position—on his feet. He opened a school in Hans Place, and was thus enabled to support himself and his wife comfortably. This must have been a proud remembrance for Mrs. Sherwood all the days of her life.

It is impossible to follow Mrs. Sherwood through the vicissitudes which attended her career, and we must be content with glimpses which are unlike what we expect from the authoress of *The Fairchild Family*. In 1795 she lost her father, a terrible blow to them all, for he was a genial, cultivated man, equally at home in any society, ‘with a religion more of the heart than of the head.’ His daughter mentions with regret that ‘he never had any distinct idea of human depravity,’ but as she observes that ‘his was a religion of enlarged love and charity, and confidence in the Divine Love,’ it is not easy to see why he would have been a better man had he been continually dwelling on his own shortcomings.

After his death, at their mother’s desire they all settled in Bridgnorth for a time, where Martha and her sister taught in the Sunday schools, then a new institution. She did not, however, neglect her own studies, for in the course of walks with her brother she learnt the Greek verbs, and at once plunged into Homer. She also kept up her music on the guitar, and wrote her second book, *Margarita*, which she sold for 40*l.*

It was in 1799, on the occasion of a visit with her mother to Thornbury, in Gloucestershire, that they were taken by their hostess to spend a day at Bath, in order to make acquaintance with Hannah More, then living in Pulteney Street. The ostensible excuse offered was the benefit that would be conferred on young Butt, now a clergyman, by an introduction to so pious and celebrated a lady. Mrs. Hannah was, however, nearly as difficult of approach as the Grand Lama. She had a bodyguard of four elderly sisters, who all talked at once and made the same objections. ‘She’—they always referred to her as ‘she,’ not from dislike to her hideous name, but from the reverence with which they regarded her—‘she was not well; she was confined to her room—such demands upon her, such a tax, such an object of public attention, the fatigue so great, the fear of giving offence so vast. Lady — had been refused, and my Lord — put off, and even Mrs. Wilberforce and the Bishop of London set aside . . .’ but when the proper amount of fuss had been made, it was agreed that *she* (always uttered in the lowest key) should be asked if she would see the visitors. After a further pause, all

done with a view to effect, they were 'led upstairs to the drawing-room, and finally into a dressing-room, where sat the lady, looking very like her pictures, though considerably older, and without a cap. She sat in an arm-chair of the invalid order, and though a strong-featured woman of a dark complexion, she had a magnificent pair of dark eyes.'

Mrs. Hannah made herself very agreeable to her guests, though she took little notice of the young lady. Her conversation appears to have taken the turn of offering advice to young Butt, and she spoke well, though in rather too self-conscious and deliberate a manner. 'The lesson,' adds Mrs. Sherwood, 'I hope, was beneficial to me when my turn came for exhibition.'

Mrs. Sherwood was always fond of meeting distinguished people, and came across a good many in the course of her life, while her intelligence and good looks must have made her welcome in any circle, even without the good manners for which she was famous among her friends. Mrs. Sherwood knew the value of manners as well as any woman living, and observes that after her return from school at Reading, where she had mixed with many distinguished foreigners, she 'had gained that something which can only be acquired by high society, and can never be given without frequent intercourse with good company, and, perhaps, a variety of good company.' She learnt to adapt herself readily to other people's ways and customs; consequently she never was embarrassed herself, or made others feel so.

At one time or another she saw something of many of the notable people of the day, and records her meetings with Mrs. Schimmelpennick, Mrs. Duncomb, who, as Miss Highmore, heard Richardson read *Clarissa* in the garden at Fulham; L. E. L., Miss Mitford, Lady Caroline Lambe, Mrs. Fry, and Fanny Kemble. She also passed an evening with a Miss Lee, who could repeat the whole of Miss Burney's *Cecilia* the year after it came out. But the most interesting meeting of all was the one she had with Sir Walter Scott and his daughter, on the voyage from Rotterdam, in 1832. 'The packet was drawn up close to the pier, whereon was the barouche, in which lay the invalid. The horses had been taken out, and boards had been placed so as it could be wheeled on deck without disturbing the sufferer. The hood of the carriage was up behind and the front open. A bed had been spread in it, on which lay Sir Walter; his fine head, that head aforetime the seat of high conceptions and glorious imaginings, being covered by a black velvet cap. When the carriage was placed on board,

there was a solemn silence for some minutes. The gayest, the most thoughtless amongst us, seemed struck with awe; and I really think we should have felt less if an actual corpse had been brought before us on a bier. On a nearer view we all thought we should have recognised the face from the many portraits which have made the world familiar with his features; but, alas! the light which even those inanimate representations conveyed, where was it now? He seemed to lie awhile in total unconsciousness, his eyelids falling heavily; but at length he raised them, and spoke to a very attentive servant who was near him; but still there was no animation in those eyes. . . . The fatigue of the morning, it seems, however, distressed Sir Walter; and when he was lifted from his carriage and borne in a chair to his cabin, it was said he was ill again; and a Russian physician on board was applied to, who administered with success a soporific draught. On awaking he called for pen and ink, and it is in vain for me to try and paint my feelings when it was asked of me to give up the implements I was using at the moment, for the benefit of the invalid. It was a high gratification to be able to meet his wishes.'

If we have lingered thus long over Mrs. Sherwood's spinsterhood, it is because to most people the English part of her life will be more interesting than the years passed in India. She was not a very young woman when she married her cousin, Henry Sherwood, and he was not quite so old as she; but as she rarely gives a date, it is not easy to state any fact with certainty. Henry Sherwood had passed many years in France during the time of the Napoleonic wars, and his adventures as a young man, in escaping to England, *via* Switzerland and Germany, would of themselves fill a book. When at last he reached home, barefooted and almost delirious, he entered the English army, and some years later married his cousin Martha, whom he had known as a child. Henry Sherwood appears to have been a very kind-hearted, good-natured man, who allowed his wife to do much as she liked, and this included their adoption in India (where they went about a year after their marriage) of quite a large number of helpless children, some temporarily, others permanently. The amount of good work done by Mrs. Sherwood in India was immense. She established schools wherever she went, and sometimes the scholars who applied for instruction were by no means drawn from the classes she particularly designed to benefit. She looked after the material comforts of all the children in any way dependent on her household; she organised regular

religious services, and altogether seems to have got through as much as ten ordinary people. And yet her own family troubles were very heavy. Her babies were invariably born delicate, and three of them lived but a very short while, but her losses only made her the more alive to the distresses of others. It was at this time and under these circumstances that religious meditation occupied more and more of her thoughts, and intercourse with the missionaries, more especially with the celebrated Henry Martyn, confirmed her mind in this bent. Yet even so, there are no traces of the illiberality and narrowness which were the distinguishing characteristics of *The Fairchild Family*. From time to time Mrs. Sherwood lets fall remarks which show that, busy as she was, she still kept up a healthy interest in secular learning and in the books of her youth. She tells with delight how the tedious voyage to India was beguiled with the wonders of the *Arabian Nights*. We gather from a reference to Corporal Trim that she was not unacquainted with *Tristram Shandy*, and we know that she had read *Don Quixote*. Besides these profane recollections, she did not hold herself entirely aloof from the life of the great country that was for the time her home. 'It was while we were at Meerut,' she writes, 'that Chuny Laul, the great Nose Fellow, brought to our gates a party of nautch girls, and asked me if I would like to see a nautch. I was glad to have the opportunity, and had the party to the long room, whilst every child and servant in the compound were collected to see the sight. . . . The influence of these nautch girls over the other sex, even over men who have been bred up in England, and who have known, admired, and respected their own countrywomen, is not to be accounted for, because it is not only obtained in a very peculiar way, but often kept up even when beauty is past. The influence steals upon the senses of those who come within its charmed circle, not unlike that of an intoxicating drug, being the more dangerous to young Europeans because they seldom fear it. . . . It was on this occasion that I thought of writing *The History of George Desmond*, which is taken from various facts. The three girls described were represented from the three introduced by Chuny Laul. . . . Of course, the effect produced on me was not similar to that described in *George Desmond*, but certainly I was astonished, fascinated, and carried as described, in fancy, to the golden halls of ancient kings. I was thus made thoroughly to comprehend the nature of the fascination which persons of this description exercise over many a fine English

youth, commencing the process of the entire ruin of all his prospects in this world.'

George Desmond must certainly be a very different book from any of the others from Mrs. Sherwood's pen. It sounds both original and interesting, and it is a pity that it is so little known and so hard to obtain; and although any secondhand bookseller will contrive to get for you without delay a copy of *Little Henry and his Bearer*, he shakes his head dubiously if you ever ask for *George Desmond*.

Not long after the nautch-girl exhibition the Sherwoods returned to England and settled in Worcester, so as to be close to Mrs. Butt, then a very old lady, not destined to live many months. After her death they moved out to a small house in the country, which must have been filled to overflowing with Captain and Mrs. Sherwood, their five children, two Indian orphans they had brought home, another from Brussels whom they had since adopted, two attendants of old Mrs. Butt's, who had been left helpless, two servants, and some pupils. To this large circle another son was shortly born, but died a little while later.

To the end of her life, in 1851, Mrs. Sherwood was the same active, intelligent, unselfish woman that she had been from the beginning, getting pleasure from the smallest trifles in a way that only very busy people can do. Besides the children above mentioned she had the superintendence of several other little Indians, left by their parents in the neighbourhood, and kept up a constant correspondence with those she had parted from in India. Yet amidst all this unwearied benevolence she found time to learn Hebrew herself and teach it to her children, with a view to making a dictionary of the Old Testament types. In this work her husband soon joined, and contributed, after ten years' hard labour, a concordance, which must greatly have simplified their toil.

It was in January, 1847, when she had lost two of her remaining daughters, that Mrs. Sherwood closes her autobiography, to which an appendix, telling of the four last years of her life, is added by her youngest child, Sophia. Her husband died in 1848, and from that blow she never really rallied. She became wearied and depressed, though she managed to conceal her sadness from the outside world, and tried to distract her thoughts by working hard at her Type Dictionary, the rough copy of which was finished after thirty years' hard toil six months previous to her death. Her last days were quiet and peaceful; she took her usual vivid

interest in other people's pleasures, and even laughed at herself for her eagerness over such little things as the opening of parcels. She sometimes talked on religious subjects, but always naturally and without effort, and to the end thought more of the future life of others than of her own coming death-struggles.

Comment is unnecessary in writing of a woman who has done so much to help her fellow-men ; yet it is to be regretted that the book by which she is most widely known should not, good as its intentions were, have been more worthy of her, for in charity, benevolence, and everything that constitutes true religion, she was immeasurably above anything that she has drawn in *The Fairchild Family*.

L. B. LANG.

Eily.

I.

'WHY won't the ice harden?' said Russell. 'I want some skating. I'm sick of this beastly hole. If I'd only a little more tin I'd run away—to London, to the pantomimes.'

'I'll tell you a story,' said Eily; 'I see such wonderful people in the coals!'

'You can't tell anything new. But cut away. Ah! it's rather jolly here, with my head on your lap. But hold hard a moment—when's that creature coming?'

'Mira? Some time this afternoon, the note said.'

'Botheration! I wish she were a boy! Now begin, Eily.'

'Stephen, you look so cold! There's plenty of room by the fire,' said Eily wistfully.

'No, thank you,' returned a hard, young voice. 'I mean to break myself of that eternal roasting.'

'He's a Spartan,' said Russell; 'I ain't. I shall be an Epicurean. Cut on, my darling.'

The golden-haired boy, his delicate limbs outstretched upon the hearthrug, formed an antagonistic contrast to the figure four years nearer manhood, seated rigidly at a distant table, the dark head supported by a thin, brown hand above a scholarly book. Eily's father, an absent-minded and short-sighted Professor of a great provincial college, was guardian to both these boys: Stephen Wade, an orphan, friendless and poor, bequeathed to him a twelve-month ago; and Russell Mildmay, sent from India in early childhood to the charge of a distant cousin, the Professor's wife. This lady had presently died; but Russell had remained in his adopted home, where, out of school hours, all the three were left, within limits, to their own devices.

Eily was soon to go, for several years, to her godmother in a distant county, to be taught and trained. What would Russell

do without her, she often wondered ; and she without—Stephen ? If only she could dare to hope that Stephen might miss her, and remember her half as poor Russell, she feared, must, the prospect would be more endurable !

The Christmas holidays were now at their height, and the Professor had consented to receive the only child of his fashionable sister, Lady Antrobus, while she herself paid visits in the neighbourhood. As Eily told her story, the other side of her mind was devising plans of protection. Mira would feel terribly shy, she feared. Russell might seem to her selfish, and Stephen might alarm her.

From time to time, moreover, the child glanced at Stephen, who sat immovable, with stern eyes fixed upon his book. She read his inward criticisms, and strove, colouring, to infuse a less frivolous element with her tale. But Russell exclaimed, ‘Oh, bother ! Shut up that dry old rot,’ and, stifling a sigh, she plunged resolutely into the most insane of fairylands. She must please poor Russell, who had nothing to do ! Stephen had his books.

‘ You’re the jolliest thing out, Eily,’ the story over, Russell said, maintaining his recumbent position ; ‘ always saving me from scrapes ! I’d settled, willy nilly, to try the ice at Wincombe Mere.’

‘ Oh, Russell ! when you promised not to go near it, and father said he would trust you !’

‘ I know. Awfully mean ; but I’ve confessed. That’s your reward for such a stunning story,’ said Russell lazily.

‘ Russell’s promises are like cobwebs,’ observed Stephen, not looking up.

‘ Cobwebs to catch flies ?’ mocked the boy.

‘ That is their purpose,’ answered Stephen dryly.

The golden head writhed on Eily’s lap.

‘ I shall be a brute when you’re gone, Eily,’ he murmured ; ‘ but I’ll have it out with Stephen yet. Some day I shall be big enough to wallop him. Hallo !’

‘ The door-bell,’ said Eily. ‘ I heard wheels.’

Mira had arrived.

II.

‘ WHAT ! Tea and Games ? How slow !’

The age of the speaker was eleven. She was shorter than Eily, her contemporary in years ; slighter, and in manner more

decisive ; a dazzling vision, in picturesque attire, with bright hair, cheeks, and eyes.

'She's the sprite in your story, who made the schoolboys play truant,' whispered Russell.

'Oh, she's beautiful ! But do tell her what splendid games we have at Mrs. Carlton's ; she won't believe me.'

'Rot ! think of all she's used to,' said Russell, with disdain. 'I'll get Mrs. Carlton to have dancing. Mrs. Carlton will do anything for me.'

'What secrets have you with Eily ?' asked Mira coquettishly. 'The party ? Then come to me, Russell. I'll give you one or two notions from the Mansion House Ball. You can have Eily any time,' she added, snatching at his hand, and springing away with him.

Eily stood still. The sky was like lead. The garden looked frost-bitten and dreary. She had stayed out, after their walk, to please Russell, although Stephen had offered to explain to her the pictures in the large *Iliad*. Russell had seemed disappointed when the offer was made, and, as usual, she had ignored her own preferences. She gazed silently after the two figures as they flitted away, not looking back or thinking again of her. It was a curious experience to Eily, who had made Russell, although two years her senior, her special charge since both were in the nursery. Presently she turned slowly, and went back to the house. In the school-room—so called—the young people's special abode, sat Stephen at his far table, surrounded by books.

'Stephen !' said Eily softly. But he did not look up.

'Are you vexed, Stephen ? I couldn't help it. You don't know how I longed to see the Homer.'

'There it is,' said Stephen, with a vigorous push at a huge easel. 'See it to your heart's content.'

Eily stole to her own room, her eyes filling. When she returned, Russell and Mira had arrived, the girl chasing the boy.

'Hallo, Eily !' cried Russell. 'We're going to make Mrs. Carlton have a co—'

Mira barred his mouth with her slight hand.

'Don't tell Eily. It's not in Eily's line.'

'Why, Russell tells me everything,' said Eily.

'Indeed ! How long will that go on ?' cried Mira, with a grimace.

'He wants to tell me this. I can see he does,' said Eily moving nearer to her boy.

Mira laughed—a shrill little peal.

'I want nothing of the kind,' said Russell roughly. 'Who made you my father confessor?'

'Come here, Eily,' said Stephen.

His stern young eyes, deeply set under their black eyelashes, glanced first at Russell, then at Mira, and annihilated them.

'Come. I'll show you the pictures,' he said.

Eily crimsoned in an ecstasy of happiness. She stood beside him, her mortifications forgotten, her heart throbbing, her eyes shining.

'Now you shall learn the difference between real heroes and sham ones,' said Stephen.

She could have stood just so, gazing at Hector, at Achilles, at the gods; hearing their burning histories of courage, endurance, glory; glancing now and then at that strong face, with its touch of fire: until the end of the world, she fancied.

Only—did Stephen believe that she thought Russell a hero? How little he understood!—But no matter.

III.

MRS. CARLTON, a lady of 'the old school,' disapproved of precocious dissipations. But Russell's faculty of coaxing enhanced his charms. The games were postponed. Little Miss Antrobus, she announced, had kindly offered to teach the new cotillon.

Stephen, who despised juvenile parties, but had chosen nevertheless to attend this one, stood, tall and sardonic, in the shadow of a heavy curtain.

'Don't dance, Eily. You won't enjoy it,' he said.

Eily meekly obeyed. She remained at his side, in her white frock, her fair hair smooth and shining. Mira wore rose colour, with gold bangles, and a necklace which sparkled. She was the centre of all the gay multitude. Mrs. Carlton's governess, at the piano, risked a stiff neck to gaze sideways upon the fairy form. The cotillon was soon in full progress. Russell looked enchanted. His great eyes, usually so soft, burned like fires.

Eily longed to be in the midst, and yet— She glanced at Stephen; his expression made her ashamed of her sympathy with the circling children.

'Look,' he said; 'they are all gone mad after a whirligig cut out of tissue paper. That's why I came. I foresaw that she had only to look and to smile, and they would trample you under their

feet, to follow her. In a general way, they're worrying the life out of you. Now you're nothing. Will it teach you a lesson ?'

' I don't wonder at it,' said Eily ; ' she's so pretty.'

' Pretty !' scoffed Stephen. ' That's what the ladies call Russell—“ Such a PRETTY boy ! ” Eily, look here !'

He drew her into the recess of the window. The thick curtains shut out the throng. But Stephen lifted a blind, and behold, another throng ! Multitudes, multitudes, of the starry host. One, in far height, excelled the others, burning with steady brilliance, serene, glorious.

' Would you rather be like that ?'—he jerked his proud young head towards the gay world beyond the curtain—‘ or that ?'—he pointed to the star.

Eily answered only by her eyes, which followed his upward gaze.

' You are a baby,' he said, ' and I am seventeen years old, and have had hard training ; but my mind was made up long ago ; it's not too soon to make up yours. You have both in you, Eily ; but that by nature strongest,' and again he pointed. ' Of course, if you choose, you can stay down here with Russell. But you will never drag Russell, or any of his kind, up there with you.'

Eily's young heart stirred vaguely.

' You can't realise it yet,' he remarked. ' But remember what I say. It is nothing to me, of course. I merely regret that such a thing as Russell should have power to ruin such a possible life as yours.'

How coldly he spoke ! Had he any love in him, thought Eily ? He looked grand, though, and beautiful ; with a beauty like that of the stars, unapproachable, high.

' Eily, where are you ?' cried Russell, pulling open the curtains. ' I want you,' he added fiercely.

The cotillon was still in full swing. Mira's partner was a handsome lad—Russell's enemy at school.

' Look !' whispered Russell, ' she has chosen him. She promised to choose me. They flocked round her, but I never thought — It's through me that they're dancing at all. Only look ! I wish I could kill him ! I'll go home.'

' Oh, no, Russell—you'd be so ashamed afterwards ! Never mind, dear.'

' Never mind ? That's fine ! Hurry up, Eily. Cut in with the rest. When my turn comes, I'll choose you. That will pay her out. Make haste.'

Poor Eily! Stephen had left the recess, and was watching, with his expression of fine scorn. But she could not grieve Russell. She dashed on, ready to cry, and was lost in the maze.

At length the party was a thing of the past. Arrived at home, Stephen went straightway upstairs; the three children lingered in the hall. The maid who had escorted the young ladies retired to her bedroom. The Professor had gone out to dine and sleep.

'I hope you enjoyed yourself, sir,' said Mira, curtseying before Russell. 'Don't you mean to thank me for teaching you that delightful cotillon?'

'You spoiled it all,' cried Russell passionately. 'You said you were looking forward—— Norton, too—the fat ass!'

'He's not fat at all. On the contrary, he was the best-looking boy in the room—except Stephen, that haughty Pharisee! I'd rather have Norton than you, any day. Why, Norton had been on the ice, in spite of the danger mark. Right across the pond! And you—when I wanted you to take me! I detest cowards. Any friend of mine must be brave.'

'Oh, Mira!' cried Eily, 'Russell promised father; that was why he wouldn't go.'

'Poor dear little baby! Let him keep him's little promise then, and save himself from drowning into the bargain!'

And, with another superb curtsey, Mira sped laughing up the stairs.

'I'll go straight off to Wincombe,' shouted Russell, 'and skate all round the mere.'

He dived into a neighbouring boot cupboard, snatched his skates from their peg, and rushed out through the frosty night.

'Stephen!' cried Eily, darting into the school-room, 'Russell will be drowned! Oh, go after him!'

Breathlessly she told her story.

'If he chooses to drown himself, and—worse—to break his promise, so be it. A fool must have his way,' said Stephen.

'Oh, Stephen, you are cruel, cruel!' cried Eily.

Pausing not one moment, away, after the headstrong lad she flew; through the shrubbery, forth under the starry sky. Far in advance, as she thought, she heard his footsteps. At last, fringed with leafless trees, stretched the wild mere, the danger signal white in the moonbeams. But where was Russell? She gazed wildly around, calling his name.

How weird and desolate the mere looked in the lonely night ! She longed to flee from it ; and yet—had it already swallowed him up ? The bright boy, so petted, so beloved ! She went cautiously down the bank. Was the ice broken ?

Once more she cried : not, this time, for Russell, but for help. Search must be made. Was that black shade a hole ? She drew nearer ; her foot slipped ; she fell, rolled helplessly, and crashed into the dark water.

She sank once, rose fighting with her hands. The thin ice yielded at her touch.

‘ Will Russell know that I died for him ? Will Stephen think— ’

A cry as wild as her own.

‘ Eily, Eily, your hand ! Give me your hand ! ’

A strong grasp clutching at her, closing on her ; strong arms lifting her up.

‘ Stephen ! ’ she gasped.

‘ Why did you do it ? ’ said the stern young voice. ‘ Russell is safe in bed, the coward ! I saw him cutting back across the fields. Don’t speak. Let me get you home.’

She clung round Stephen’s neck, shuddering, wet and cold, but happy. She was never so happy before.

And overhead that star, brighter than the rest, burned with the same steady glow.

IV.

EILY’s godmother refused to part with her at the time first appointed. The girl was twenty years old when, upon that lady’s second marriage, she returned home—to London, where her father now occupied an important post.

Her exile had rolled by like a dream. Here, in a pleasant house at Kensington, were the old servants, the old books and furniture ; only an easy-tempered lady housekeeper was new—to Eily, not to the establishment. It was early June. The window-boxes were exquisite, the balconies wreathed in creepers. The Professor had greeted Eily with self-complacent approval. She was very happy. She felt like her old self, the self of nine years ago. In the glass she saw her old face, in some degree even more childlike—for she had been unduly burdened in those days of yore.

‘ You will see your former friend, Mr. Mildmay, soon,’ observed the lady housekeeper. ‘ He was here yesterday, inquiring for you

A most courteous, good-looking young man! I shall never again listen to idle tales.'

'What tales do you mean?' cried Eily.

'Oh, my dear, he is so delightful—they can't possibly be true. There are scandals afloat, now, about everyone. You know, by the way, that he was all but engaged to your lovely cousin, Miss Antrobus? At one time they were continually together. Indeed, her marriage to Lord Nortonbury quite took me by surprise.'

'He was an old schoolfellow of Russell's,' said Eily dreamily. 'Norton we called him then.'

'Ah, he only came into his title early this year. Miss Antrobus's attentions were transferred simultaneously, report said. But the person whom she is really thought to have preferred—you mustn't repeat this, dear, or you'll get me into trouble—was another old friend of yours.'

Eily bent over a bowl of roses, ashamed of an involuntary blush.

'Mr. Stephen Wade, the author. I met them both at a private concert, one evening, and she was setting her cap at him vigorously. She had no success. My love, that young man is made of ice!—(Your dear father in his youth must have been much such another.)—And yet he is so remarkably handsome! and a decided lion, though difficult to get hold of. Miss Antrobus was not singular; I have heard many jokes about unrequited attachments in connection with him. You are come into a sadly giddy world, dear, you see. How refreshing it is to look at your happy young face!'

The impulsive lady housekeeper rose and kissed the girl, whose eyes a sudden radiance had kindled.

That very evening, after dinner, Russell called. The lady housekeeper had retired to the back drawing-room; she indulged herself with forty winks, after dinner, she said. Eily's low chair was near the flowery balcony; Russell, standing just within it, looked down upon her.

'You are hardly changed at all. You rest me just as you always did,' he said smiling. He had the same irresistible smile. The boyish *insouciance* had given place to a polished courtesy; the fashionably cropped hair had lost its curl, but not its tints of gold; he was only of middle height, but his figure had fulfilled its promise of finished grace.

'Do young men of twenty-two often need rest here?' asked Eily, with her childlike laugh.

She looked up, and the eyes which she met were not those of her recollection. They were the eyes of one who has tasted of the knowledge of good and evil, and is choosing the evil, and yet, weakly and vainly, in his heart of hearts, loves the good.

Her face changed.

'You seem really tired, Russell. Are you very busy, or what? I am longing to hear all you have been doing since we met last.'

'That's a good time ago, isn't it?' said Russell, bringing forward another low chair to face her own; 'I doubt whether I can very well satisfy a longing of such a width. Stephen, now, might give you a strict account of every moment. Have you seen Stephen yet?'

Eily turned to an illustrated paper upon her lap, and examined a portrait.

'Not yet,' she said.

'Ah, this is a case of real work, now. He's up to the eyes in books and ink. May I look?'

Eily was gazing at the portrait without taking it in. She let Russell draw it gently towards him. He also gazed fixedly for some moments, then pushed it away, and leaned back, his hands clasped behind his head.

'I used to come to you, didn't I, in all my troubles, in those old days?' said he. Again he glanced at the portrait.

It was of Mira, in her wreath of orange blossoms. Below was printed: '*Bridal Portrait of the Baroness Nortonbury*'. The hard outlines could not belie that exquisite beauty. If exquisite here, what when colour, change, and sparkle were added?

Russell rose, and stood once more in the window.

'Have you heard?' he said.

'I've heard only a little bit of gossip.'

'For once, true gossip,' said Russell, with a short laugh; 'I was a fool.'

'Oh, Russell dear! Did you care really?' asked Eily, in her old caressing way.

'Care! I tell you, Eily, she has about done for me—as to anything worth having. And all to avenge herself on Stephen!'

'How do you mean?'

'She was trying to stir up his jealousy. As soon stir up the Albert Memorial! But as for me, I was gulled. She did like me a bit, I think, too. But then that Norton turned up again. You weren't here, Eily, to help me to pay her out in her own coin. Eh?'

He half smiled, with a glance which questioned whether he were going too far. Only sympathy, however, deep and guileless, looked back at him in Eily's clear gaze.

'Poor Russell! I'm so dreadfully sorry—more than I can say. But she wasn't worthy of you.'

'Wasn't she? Ah, my innocent! I think, upon the whole, Eily, you're a little younger than nine years ago.—Well, I must be off. I'm going to drown dull care in the only two ways I find efficacious.'

'And what are those?'

'A game of billiards and a glass of fizz. If I were Stephen, I'd read Marcus Aurelius.'

'But you've got me too, now, whenever you want me. Don't forget that,' said Eily.

V.

'Now attend, my dear! (These conversazioni are most instructive.) There—under that archway—is a perfect knot of *savants*. Look well at the tall young man with a dark moustache. He is Mr. Wade, the historian, everyone says, of the future. It will be a feather in your cap, some day, my love, that you saw him in his youth. How he towers above the others! Author of *Cicero and his Times*. Be sure to remember.—That bald-headed person, talking to him, is the famous What's-his-name, author of the book on medals. Make a mental note of all this, my dear; I shall question you to-morrow.'

The diligent voice, with its demure pupil, moved on through the rooms crowded by lions and their admirers. Eily, seated beside her chaperon, the lady housekeeper, looked up, her soul in her eyes. 'Author of *Cicero and his Times*', she repeated mechanically. Yes, there was Stephen! Stephen, as it were glorified; risen to all and beyond all her imaginings throughout the separating years. The angular youth had expanded into a man like those heroes in the old pictures: self-controlled, his head high, his mouth resolute; the hard antagonism of the past replaced by a look of power—as of one who has fought for his own place, and means to hold it and climb higher. But the handsome face was cold, as of yore; its depth was the depth of intellect and of moral force, unstirred by tenderness or passion.

'Stephen! Stephen!' thought Eily, gazing. She longed to run to him, as in her childhood. But she was a child no longer. That fact now weighed upon her painfully.

'Eily, do you remember me ?'

Her attention had been momentarily diverted ; and in that moment he had recognised her, crossed the room, was at her side. His deeply set eyes, with a new light in them, met her own.

'What a pleasant surprise ! I heard you were come home ; but I thought you were sure to be changed—grown up into a fashionable young lady.'

'Well, I am grown up,' said Eily smiling. 'I can't help that, you know.'

Stephen smiled back. Her heart gave a wild bound. In his smile was a look which Eily had never before seen ; a look of admiration, of satisfaction, of something more intense than these.

'You are what I dreamed of—not what I expected,' he said. He sat down a little behind her, and leaned forward, that he might gaze at her by stealth.

'Yes, Eily—I had a dream of you, and I feared—— Have you thought me very rude for not calling ?'

'No ; but I wanted to see you.'

'Is that true ? I was a fearful young prig in old days. May I tell you something, while I have the chance ?'

The girl bowed her head, smiling still from inward joy.

'I've often wished that I could beg your pardon. May I beg it now ?'

'I don't know why. You did me a great deal of good.'

'Because your soul was of the kind which gets good everywhere. I was a horrid fellow. I realise it now. I'm glad you didn't, though—if you didn't. Every day of the last fortnight I've been questioning, "Shall I go and see whether she's Eily still ?" And every day I decided, "My dream's best." But I was mistaken.'

Eily looked down, not answering. She herself was in a dream, she thought.

'Eily, I was mistaken,' repeated Stephen.

Then she glanced at him ; and again she met his eyes.

VI.

'EILY,' exclaimed the lady housekeeper, a month later, 'I am simply disgusted with these slanderers. Such an utterly charming young man !'

'What has happened ?' asked Eily anxiously.

'They dared, this afternoon, my dear, to tell me that on Monday night, Mr. Mildmay was met, at a late hour, intoxicated, staggering home. I declined to listen. "Mr. Mildmay," I said, "is far too delightfully refined." Does it not shock you, Eily?'

Eily sighed. The anxiety deepened on her brow.

The same evening, when the lady housekeeper, as usual, was napping in the back drawing-room, Russell appeared. He looked worn and jaded.

'Play to me, Eily,' he said. 'One of the *Lieder*.'

He sank upon a lounge at a little distance. It was growing dusk; the electric light in the streets shone full upon his fair hair and tired face. As Eily played, she watched him, her heart aching.

'What is it, Russell?' she asked, after half an hour's music, drawing her chair to his side.

'Nothing, now. I always get right when I've been a little while with you.'

'Russell dear—don't be angry—would you mind telling me where you went on Monday evening?'

He sat up, reddening furiously.

'So Fortescue reported me? The sneak! Never mind, Eily. It was an accident. I was awfully ashamed afterwards; I always am.'

'Always! Oh, Russell! Has it happened before?'

'Yes, it has. As you ask, I tell you. It's all through Mira. I get thinking of her, and then I get mad; and I have to find comfort somewhere. And then, you see, the comfort leads one on.'

'Poor boy!' said Eily softly.

He seized her hand and pressed it to his lips.

'You don't know what I am, Eily, or you wouldn't care for me.'

'Yes, I would. Russell, will you promise never to do it again?'

'Never drink too much again? I daren't. I might break my word. Eily, you don't understand. I must have something.'

'I know something better,' said Eily.

'Many things, no doubt; but not for me. There can be nothing good, ever, now, for me.'

Eily was silent. She laid that cool little hand of hers upon his burning forehead. Fragrance, sweet and pure, from the balcony flowers, floated into the room.

*'Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly,'*

she murmured. 'You've not tried that, Russell.'

'That old tale! I don't believe in it,' he said. 'I've given it all up.'

'Mr. Wade!' announced the servant at the door.

'Confound him, the starched anchorite!' muttered Russell rising. 'Eily, I'm off.'

'What has he been worrying you about?' inquired Stephen, looking after him with unfriendly eyes. 'Don't concern yourself, Eily; you can't change him.—May I ring for lights?' he added in a milder tone. 'I've brought the books—Dante and the rest.'

'Oh, how kind!' cried Eily overjoyed.

In Stephen's presence, her anxieties were quickly forgotten. They sat side by side at her own special table, and he interpreted to her beautiful engravings, as he had interpreted the *Iliad* pictures long ago.

'This *Beatrice* has a look of you,' he said in a low tone which strangely thrilled her. He gazed first at the angelic countenance, and then at Eily, lost in his own thoughts.

'Do you remember that star?' he asked suddenly. 'Once, before you came home, I dreamed that I saw your face in it, far above me, smiling down.'

Eily prayed for Russell that night; she could not grieve for him. She was too happy for grieving.

The season was drawing to its close when, one evening, he came as before.

'Eily,' he said, 'I will be open with you.' A desperate light fired his eyes.

'I resolved—though I would not promise—to keep straight for your sake; but yesterday I failed again. I'm on my road to the dogs; that's plain. I'll make you that promise now, though—I'll give up drink altogether—on one condition. It's quite impossible, any other way.'

'And what is the condition?'

'That you will marry me, Eily. When I'm with you, the devil goes out of me. I've been on the slope for months. Only you can save me. Eily, blessed one! I'll make you the promise this moment—because I shall no longer fear breaking it—if you will be my wife.'

Eily was white before; she grew whiter now. She looked at Russell, the boy once so bright, so dear.

'Stop! I must think,' she said, clasping her hands—wringing them, unknowing.

She went to the balcony, and gazed into the deepening night.

Stephen's face rose clearly before her. She would die that moment, she thought, to hear his lips say what his eyes had said so often—'Eily, I love you.'

'Russell, how could you be happy with me?' she said. 'You don't care for me. You cared for Mira.'

He laughed mockingly.

'Mira! That little demon who lured me on, and then—yes, I cared for her. But she was never to me what you have been. She maddened me; and you—you are rest, holiness, salvation. If I lose you, I lose all those—for ever, for ever.'

Despair was in his face—so young, so full of charm. Once more Eily looked into the night.

'Stephen is strong,' she thought; 'he can endure. He has not spoken; I should do him no wrong. His work would comfort him—if he needed comfort. He was always cold; perhaps it hasn't struck deep.—But oh!—Her heart cried out, as if in that moment it broke.

'I see,' said Russell, turning away. 'Eily, forgive me. You were so good to me once, and I hoped— But I deserve it. I deserve it all.'

Then, as she saw him about to depart in dejection, to ruin worse than death, a sudden passion of pity overwhelmed her.

'Russell, come back. I would lay down my life to save you. I would—and I will. Yes, I will be your wife.'

They clung together as when they were children; and the love was still burning which had strengthened her to suffer, long before.

'I can guess a little, now, what the Saviour felt when He died for us—when He left heaven for us,' she said in her broken heart.

VII.

THE Professor, although his head was in the clouds, had sufficient acquaintance with Russell to preclude consent to any open engagement, or to marriage before the spring. But the lady housekeeper, who had formed her own conclusions, begged that the secrecy might not include Stephen. Thus, upon a sultry morning, as Eily sat alone in the drawing-room, a quiet step mounted the stairs, and Stephen's voice at the door said:

'Can I speak to you? Eily, I will take this only from your own lips. Is it true?'

'That I am engaged? Yes.'

'To Russell?'

'Yes.'

He had stood near her. He moved to a little distance, and sat down.

'I would speak to your father, only—— It is not my place to interfere. Yet, to you, I must speak. Do you know Russell's character?'

'I know that he has done wrong.'

'Wrong? He is worthless—a profligate.'

'No one can be really worthless, if Christ really died,' murmured Eily.

'And it is your deliberate choice? You know little of the world, but still—you are twenty years old, and you have plenty of sense. It is your deliberate choice to marry him?'

Eily bowed her head.

A long silence followed. Then, his voice low and calm, with a resolute, outward calm, Stephen said:

'I have made an awful mistake.'

Eily raised her eyes. He was looking down, his hands clenched, his brow flushed and contracted.

'I told you, when we first met again, that I had been afraid to see you. I am not a man given to dreams. I had only one. But that one was my life.'

He rose.

'Good-bye,' he said.

'Stephen, don't be angry,' she cried feebly.

'I am not angry. I am only disappointed. Disappointed? Oh, the weakness of words! I mean, I am only shipwrecked.—Eily, I have never in my life loved any creature, man or woman, but you. I loved you from the first moment when I saw you. It is woven, like bindweed, with my being. Why do I tell you? I shall repent afterwards. For what, in my right mind, could I ever desire or admire in any one who chose Russell as a friend—far less, as a husband? I have been like many another, deluded by a face, just as you yourself were always infatuated, I remember, by that golden hair—to quote your novels. You were never the Eily I mistook you for. You had nothing in common with her.'

Once more the girl looked up. His eyes were full of hard anguish. Into her own flashed a desperate appeal. Should she

explain?—But ah! if she explained, his indomitable will would break the cords of the sacrifice! Russell would be lost, in depths beyond her fathoming. ‘If I perish, I perish,’ she thought wildly.

Yet, for the first time, he felt a touch of perplexity, of irresolution, as he looked back into her eyes.

Only his iron self-control, the growth of a life of fortitude, restrained the mad impulse to snatch her to his heart. He would not touch that which was another man’s. He clenched his hands more tightly.

‘If Russell should fail you, after all, and if . . . it is a million to one—still, if, I misjudge you, remember! I shall not be changed. That is my curse. I cannot change.—Would that I could, you fair, false girl!’

Then, in a moment, without one more word or look, he had left her.

‘O God!’ moaned Eily, kneeling with hidden face, ‘if there is any other way to save Russell, let me die! let me die!’

VIII.

THE months had rolled by to December. London was unusually full, as the fashionable world counts fulness. One day Eily read in a Society paper that Lord and Lady Nortonbury had arrived, from Paris, at the Grand Hotel.

She had realised of late how precarious was her hold upon Russell. For some weeks after their engagement he had seemed happy, but then again had shown signs of restlessness; his visits had slackened—followed by repentance, amendment, restlessness once more. The girl felt often sick at heart, bewildered, and terrified when she thought of the future.

‘I met Wade this morning,’ said the Professor, bolting his soup. ‘He has been in Greece, gathering materials for his book. He looks shockingly thin.’

‘So I heard,’ said the lady housekeeper.

After dinner Eily followed her chaperon to the cosy nook in the back drawing-room.

‘What have you heard,’ she asked, lowering the gas, ‘about Stephen?’

‘You mustn’t appear too anxious,’ said the lady housekeeper laughing. ‘Poor fellow! he has been out of health for months.

Running down, Dr. Wallace calls it; no disease, but a steady lowering of vitality. If it goes on, it will be serious; and yet they can detect no cause.'

'Are you comfortable now?' said Eily. 'I'm so tired! I think I'll go to bed.'

She crept away to hide her bitter tears.

Russell had not called for some days. The next evening he rushed in unexpectedly.

'Russell! Is Stephen worse?' exclaimed Eily, who, as usual, was sitting alone.

'Stephen?' he said with a sharp look at her. 'Who thought of Stephen? Don't remind me of that self-sufficient Stoic. I came to tell you that I have broken my promise.—All right, Mrs. Vernon! You go back to your sofa. I'm only just explaining something to Eily. By your leave,' and he closed the folding doors.

'There! She thinks me awfully rude, but what of that? I must throw up the sponge, Eily. You've been a darling, an angel—but angels are thrown away upon me. Yes, I went mad last night. And do you know why? I saw Mira. She leaned over her box in the theatre. She looked at me. She did not mind my looking at her. She smiled. I could never withstand her smile.'

'Russell!' cried Eily agast.

'I beg your pardon, Eily—a thousand thousand times. If you care for me, I'm sorry. But you don't, I know. It's all over. I must go my own way.'

He started up wildly. A crumpled note was in his hand. Quick as thought Eily seized it.

'Grand Hotel, Wednesday.

'I shall be alone after seven. Come and see me.'

'Russell, Mira sent you this? You won't go—tell me you won't go!'

'Why, do you care, darling? Don't cry. I hate to hurt you. I'm so sorry, Eily! I can't help it, dear, I can't help it.'

'But you won't go, Russell?' She clung to him, her arms about his neck. 'Russell, Russell, I laid down my life for you. I did. Oh, more than my life! Was it all for nothing? Oh, don't go, Russell! Never mind your broken promise! I'll take you as you are. I'll try to please you better. I'll ask father.—Only don't, don't go.'

'Let me alone, Eily.' He untwined her arms. 'If she wrote to me from hell, I would go to her.'

Then he dashed out of the room and down the stairs. The hall door closed with a bang.

IX.

STEPHEN was leaning over Westminster Bridge, his eyes fixed upon the water, which the wintry sunset illuminated with a red and fitful glow. His face was hollow and worn ; he looked like one who has no interest in life, who is waiting silently until life relaxes her hold—physically weak, moreover, not caring to change his dreamy posture. The river flowed by, and behind him the people hurried to and fro.

Presently quick footsteps slackened, stopped, approached his side. He raised his head, half dazed, and saw Russell.

'Why, Stephen, old chap ! I heard you were bad, and you look it, with a vengeance ! But I haven't a moment. Can you walk on with me ? I've something to say.'

'What is it ?' asked Stephen coldly.

'I want you to take a message for me. I'm off to New Zealand. My father bought land there——'

Suddenly his speech was ended. A smart pony carriage, driven by a lady, was rapidly crossing the bridge. Russell, intent upon his subject, had not observed it. Only Stephen saw the exquisite form, the bright hair waving below the fashionable hat, the sparkling eyes, and recognised Mira.

She recognised them also—the two young men walking in her direction, side by side. Those eyes looked from one to the other ; their sparkle became a flash. Her ponies were restive ; they swerved, close upon Russell. Stephen seized his arm to draw him out of the way. But in the same instant Mira lashed them maliciously, ignoring the passers-by. They dashed forward, trampling Russell under their hoofs.

The wheels rolled over him and flew on. The golden hair which had excited Stephen's disdain shone, as the red glow kindled it, from the dust.

'Stephen, am I dying ?' he said faintly.

He had just awakened in his bed at the hospital. The house-surgeon signed to Stephen from his post on the other side.

'Would you like to see—anyone ?' asked Stephen, bending lower.

'No—I won't frighten her. I was telling you, when—I had taken my passage to New Zealand. Ask at the office—*The Southern Neptune*—you'll find it true. I'm glad now. Oh, I'm glad I made up my mind !'

'There was a message. Can you remember ?'

'Ah ! a message to Eily. Yes, tell her that I did as she wished.—I conquered, after all. I didn't go. She'll know what I mean. Tell her I didn't go.—Tell her that I tore up the note, and sent it back in an envelope, without a word, to the hotel.—And then I thought, if I stayed in England, the same would come over again.—And I remembered my father's land. I thought—if I went and worked hard—'

The house-surgeon stooped to wipe away great drops gathering on the forehead.

'I broke my promise. Ask Eily all about it.' He turned wistfully towards Stephen. 'I was ashamed to go and wish her good-bye. I meant to write by the pilot. I meant to say, "Eily, I should have been lost but for you."

'I will say it instead,' returned Stephen. The glazing eyes closed in peace.

'Would you wish to see the chaplain ?' the house-surgeon asked.

But Russell did not hear.

'Eily's hymn,' he murmured ; 'what was it ?

Jesus, Lover of my soul—

That old story of a Saviour.—I can believe it, when I think of Eily. What did she say ? "You've not tried that, Russell."

"*Jesus—Jesus—Lover of my soul,*
"*Let me to Thy bosom fly . . . !*"

'I hadn't tried it then. But I'll try it now. I'm going—I'm going—to make a fresh start—and try it now.'

The large eyes opened with the liquid smile of their boyhood. Russell was gone.

X.

It was night, and the stars were shining.

'Eily,' said Stephen musingly, 'do you realise that I was literally dying for you ? I have always laughed that kind of thing to scorn. Yet it was true.'

'Ah, Stephen! if I had known from the first, perhaps——
But you were always so hard and so strong.'

'I had one weak place, though, and that was mortal. Achilles' heel! Never mind! You have brought me back to life. Now you must help me in another life—which I have only just begun. Perhaps I should never have begun it, Eily, but for you.'

'What do you mean?' asked Eily, all unconscious.

'I'll tell you some time. Russell knows.—Ah, darling!
darling!'

His eyes, as she gazed down into them, were full of adoration. His countenance, once so cold, seemed transfigured.

'Eily, look!—Do you recognise our star? Do you remember my telling you that you would never draw Russell up there?'

He stopped suddenly; he thought of his dream, of Eily's face in those radiant heights. An old prophecy sounded in his ears. Was it Russell's voice, answering, far away?

'THEY THAT BE WISE SHALL SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT, AND THEY THAT TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS AS THE STARS FOR EVER AND EVER.'

E. CHILTON.

The Epic of April.

IT was an early spring, and the swallow that year was an April fool. On the first of the month I first saw him, flitting low above the pool at Milton Court. The house-martin followed just five days later; the earliest sand-martin took up his quarters in the sandstone cliff by Bury Hill ice-house on the eighteenth of April. Yet the swallow was not quite such a fool as he looked, either. March had, indeed, gone out like a lamb; and his lamb-like demeanour had encouraged the midges to disport themselves by thousands in aerial dances along the shady lanes, where they insisted on immolating themselves as watery holocausts in the eyes and mouths of innocent passers-by. Above the pond they were skimming in countless myriads; and the swallows, darting after them open-mouthed in rhythmical curves, returned in the very nick of time to batte on the rich feast thus provided for them beforehand. On February the 28th, I doubt not, they had been hawking about with equal gusto over the garden pools of Sidi Salah at Mustapha Supérieur, or eating their fill of African midges among the tall palm groves of Oran and Tunis. On the 29th the weather in Algeria (says my note-book) 'became uncomfortably warm,' and winter migrants of the human species decided to take the Marseilles packet. 'Africa will soon be too hot to hold us,' thought the experienced elders of the swallow tribe; 'insects must be getting plentiful in Spain by this time;' and lo! next day they assembled in their thousands on the spurs of the Sahel, and set out in a body for Tangier and Gibraltar. All through the first half of March they pervaded Andalusia; with the middle of the month they had moved on to Aragon; by the 20th they were feasting upon Pyrenean midges at Pau and Perpignan. But on the last day of the windy month they crossed the Channel boldly, by Cape Grisnez and Folkestone, and All Fools Day found them restored once more to their summer quarters in that familiar nook of dear old Surrey. By the 6th the house-

martins were back under our eaves—four pairs, as usual—occupying the same old hanging mud-huts as ever, and returning gladly to the cosy homes which they deserted last autumn for their alternative quarters beyond sea in Africa.

The ash was another of the April fools. Its first flowers unfolded themselves the selfsame morning. Early in the day, too, the ground was covered with spiders' webs, made conspicuous by the beaded pearls of glistening dew. If there were midges for the swallows to hawk after on the pool, there must be midges also for the spiders to stalk in the Westcott meadows. As soon as the prey appears upon the earth, its watchful enemies are ever at hand to dog it. Thaw loosens the soil for pursuer and pursued impartially. No sooner does the earthworm begin to move in his neat round burrow than the mole throws up his dark mole-hills in the greener fields. No sooner do the flies begin to lay their eggs upon the surface of the water than the trout follow suit by rising in search of them.

On the 2nd we had sunshine, and I saw the first ring-snake of the spring season basking in the light on the side of Denbies. The blue ground-ivy also came into blossom that morning, and bees were sucking the honey industriously from its deep tubes. It is a thorough-going bee flower, the ground-ivy, with a long corolla adapted specially in shape and colour for the ministration of those highest insect allies. A friend heard the nightingale near the church at Mickleham—in the Mickleham valley the nightingale abounds. Keats used to come down to Burford Bridge Inn for holiday outings ; was it there, I wonder, that his heart ached and a drowsy numbness pained his senses, till he heard the song of the nightingale from Norbury Woods ? On the 3rd the first cowslip of the year was picked. The primroses, as usual, had bloomed much earlier : they never develop the common stalk of the flower-heads, but, growing from the banks, waste no material needlessly on the production of a tall and expensive stem. That makes them earlier. Cowslips, on the contrary, cling rather to the level ; as a rule, they grow upon the top of knolls or in damp bottoms : they require to raise their blossoms high up in the air to overtop the grasses, and the necessity thus imposed upon them for producing a tall stem keeps them later by a fortnight than their paler sisters of the banks and hedgerows. The box-wood on Box Hill came into flower the same day, and the first wan foliage began to unfold from the young shoots on the gnarled bole of the elm-trees.

'Tis a perpetual feast thus to note from year to year the

process of the seasons. I write out in full this single record of a previous April partly in the hope that others may be interested in watching the month this year, and comparing it with these past echoes of an early springtide. On the 5th the pear-tree burst into full flower—a dangerous precocity; for the setting of the fruit two things are necessary: abundance of bees to fertilise the flowers, and absence of light night-frosts, which may nip and warp up the swelling ovary. Another early note was the appearance of the first brood of goslings strutting about in their fluffy baby plumage on Holmwood Common: plenty of food for them now in the ponds, where the newt was already assuming his jagged crest, and the tadpoles were rapidly acquiring legs and frog-like dimensions. The young of all animals make their entrance on life at the time when the provender of their species is most abundant; swallows, which keep two summers every year, nest twice and bring up a couple of broods per annum, as they find the food-supply permit them in Europe and in Africa. I observed wood-sorrel in flower in Glory Wood, but it must have been out a day or two earlier, as on the 5th it was already plentiful.

The sixth brought us the wee green tassels of the dog's mercury; and the elms were now reddened with sedentary blossom. Very few people, I fancy, ever notice at all the flowering of the elms, and yet it is one of the greatest and most notable events in our floral calendar. If you look up at the naked elm-branches, silhouetted with bare twigs against the blue April sky, you will see them blushing scarlet with the button-like bloom; and if you gaze at the trees from a little distance off, you will find their tops showing all ruddy throughout with the thick masses of pinky blossom. Pull down one bough, and break off a branch covered with sessile flowers; you will be surprised to think you have so seldom noticed such a large and conspicuous lily-like bell. It is the absence of foliage that makes one overlook the rose-coloured elm-flowers: if the tree were covered at the same time with delicate green leaves, the contrast between the fresh wan verdure of spring and the rich pinky-purple of the beautiful blossom couldn't fail to arrest and attract even the least observant eye. But, clustering as the blossoms do upon the naked boughs, they make the tree look all red alike, and so nobody pauses to gaze at them or admire them. Except, indeed, the bees: those eager pilferers are busy among the nectaries, and their hum hangs thick on all the stagnant air. It is to attract them, of course, that the elm-blossoms are red: all the allies of the elm,

like the nettles and pellitories, have but little, inconspicuous greenish flowers, wind-fertilised, with a curious provision for letting the pollen burst out elastically from tiny pockets whenever the heads are shaken by a passing breeze.

The seventh I must mark as *dies non*. Nothing at all happened : rain, perhaps, or kept at home by headache. On the eighth, however, my calendar shows a further record ; a record that amply bears out the wisdom of our ancestors : the cuckoo-flowers were waving on the cold weald clay, and the cry of the cuckoo, that wandering Voice, was first heard among the spreading beeches on the Nower. The connection of name marks a connection of fact : the two events are pretty generally synchronous. But the cuckoo is richer in eponymous flowers than any other bird or beast that folklore wots of. Besides the lady-smock, thus immemorially consecrated to him by popular dedication, he claims also the cuckoo-pint, the cuckoo-buds, the cuckoo-bread, and the cuckoo-spice. Then, too, the froth with which the young frog-hopper so unpleasantly surrounds himself in his earlier days is known as cuckoo-spit ; and the frog-hopper himself, as Devonshire boys will tell you, turns in due time, by some Ovidian metamorphosis, into a full-grown cuckoo. Strange things happen in out-of-the-way places of nature's economy, revealed only to old women and village schoolboys, and undreamt of in Mr. Herbert Spencer's philosophy. But strange things happen in the real world, too, and one of the strangest is the way plants like the cuckoo-flower cling to particular geological formations. In this district our lady-smock follows the weald clay and the gault, avoiding religiously the chalk and the greensand. Wherever even a little bay of weald clay indents the outline of the greensand hills, there the lady-smock encroaches on the sandstone flora ; but beyond the limits of the two low muddy deposits we never find it. Many other flowers are equally confined to particular habitats and geological formations. Thus the blue rampion and the white helleborine, that occur abundantly upon the slopes of the North Downs just opposite Dorking, stop dead short at the limit of the chalk : the Teesdalia, the silvery potentilla, and two or three other rare flowers of the sandstone grow only at the outcrop of the Folkestone beds ; and a single rare American strayling never gets beyond a certain narrow belt of particularly red and vivid greensand. In the cornfields of the weald clay towards Holmwood, the corn-buttercup runs riot, a common and pernicious weed ; not a solitary field on the sandstone, chalk, or gault ever shows a single

stray specimen of that pest of farmers. In fact, one might almost write upon the Geological Survey the prevailing plants of each formation, down even to its minutest stratigraphical subdivisions.

On the ninth the blackthorn blossomed on Holmwood Common, in a tentative, straggling, blackthorny fashion. It is the ancestor of the plum; but plums have really no reason to be proud of their family connections. The flowers, grouped upon the naked black boughs, turn towards the sun and court the insects; they thus steal a march upon the may and other leafy competitors, and supply honey to a whole crowd of early flies and bumble-bees, among whom Andrenas and Syrphidæ predominate in England. A perpetual succession has thus to be kept up of specialised food-plants for specialised insects. You may track the insect's bill of fare through the year, indeed, from early spring to late autumn, beginning, like one of these very Andrenas, with willow-catkins and gooseberry blossom; going on upon violets, buttercups, and various peaflowers; continuing still later with honeysuckles, labiates, and valerians; and ending off as the year closes in with the last lingering autumnal devil's-bits and scabiouses. If the plants did not thus provide for their insect guests by connivance beforehand, the bees must starve: insects and flowers have arrived at last at a *modus vivendi* between themselves, in accordance with which unwritten concordat a new species always comes into blossom to replace for that particular species of insect ally the kind then just ceasing to bloom in its chosen habitat. Only by such a wider consensus of growth between all the parts of the fauna and flora inhabiting any given district of earth can things on our planet keep on working at all; and yet the consensus balances itself as accurately and easily as a stone flung into a soft bed of mud makes a receptacle that fits its every curve and facet.

The tenth was showery, with blue sky overhead and white fleecy clouds. Nothing new on my books, except the flowering of the currants. On the eleventh I saw the red-rattle by the Holmwood ponds—an extraordinary record. The beeches on the Nower that day were just coming into leaf: they are the thickest in foliage of all our English trees, and kill off almost everything that tries to eke out a spare livelihood beneath them. The meadow-lark sang in what we call lark-meadow—a field in the allotments, traversed by the footpath that runs across to Westcott. That field is famed for them. It is unpoetical to acknowledge it, but I'm afraid we must admit the larks love it (for all their crystal

streams), because the ground is often turned, and, not to put too fine a point upon it—worms are plentiful. Shade of Shelley, forgive me!

Next morning, the twelfth, after a showery night, the banded snails came out by thousands in the lanes and hedgerows. They hibernate through the winter, closing the mouth of the shell with a thin filmy partition, like the buttered paper we put over jam-pots. Then they lie by and luxuriate. Hardly a breath of air straggles through the filmy door, and the lungs and heart remain, therefore, for weeks and weeks all but inactive. It must be one long dream, half sleeping, half waking, like the delicious ten minutes just before that awful awakening, ‘Hot water, sir!’ But with the snails it lasts for four or five months together, and the water, when it comes, isn’t much above freezing-point. Nevertheless, one sunny day tempts out the adventurous molluscs from their lurking-places—the survivors, that is to say; for though all alike do their best to straggle through the winter, many perish in the attempt of cold and hunger, or are eaten in their lairs by more vigilant enemies. Yet those that pull through come out again smiling, as calm as though their relatives hadn’t half of them been devoured in their sleep by hereditary foemen. Their brightly coloured shells give life to the hedgerows; they look so glad and blithe with their protruded horns that I feel sure they know well the joy of living. But if anybody objects to the epithet *blithe* as applied to snails, I’m sure he has never studied the immortal works of Moquin-Tandon.

The thirteenth was wet, and a *Fortnightly* article engrossed attention. On the fourteenth—oh, joy!—the first swift of the season. We hailed the augury. I have never known the wily swift mistaken, indeed, in his weather forecast. One swallow notoriously doesn’t make a summer: one swift does, beyond fear of contradiction. He is the sybarite of his class, luxurious, warmth-loving, not given to chill winds, a hater of discomfort. More than once, it is true, I have known him stay in our chilly north too late, till he dropped on the ground of cold and inanition; but never yet have I found him return too early. He only arrives after the flies have hatched out from the pupa in considerable numbers, for he is a voracious feeder, and he requires an incredible quantity of solid fly-meat to carry his tiny body through the day successfully. But this is no wonder, when one remembers how active he is and what enormous distances he traverses on the wing every night and morning. Probably no bird ever flies so

much; and he has but a tiny body to perform his marvellous feats with. As a necessary consequence, therefore, he has to keep on feeding all day long, at least while he is on the wing, in order to supply fuel to the muscles for this constant activity; he eats as he flies, and flies as he eats; and he starves in no time if cut short of provender. So it is no wonder he never comes north till he is quite sure of abundant food in our chilly upper air; and no wonder he goes south again as soon as supplies begin to fail once more in his aerial hunting-grounds. It is this peculiarity that gives him value as part of the naturalist's calendar; he marks the real moment of the coming on of summer.

But summer brings with it its pests as well as its pleasures. The very same day, I find, saw the earliest horse-flies hatched from their larval cases. It was the flies that brought the swifts, no doubt; and what hatches out the little flies will hatch out the big ones. For days, already, tiny midges had been dancing in the warm lanes towards Holmwood, and now the big kinds were beginning to follow them in the race for a livelihood. Whitlow-grass was in flower, and the larches were draping themselves in tassel-like tufts of delicate green foliage.

On the fifteenth the red ant engaged for the first time in his annual task of shaming the sluggard. No more cuckoos yet, but I saw a redstart. The newspapers were full of other mundane matters; chronic state of European tension. My country almanac noted no more serious event than the two here recorded.

The sixteenth was a grand day—a day teeming with interest. Showers in the morning; a fine afternoon, with delicious spring-like westerly breezes. I never shall see an English April again, I suppose, but I shall carry that day to my grave in the South with me. The first white-throat appeared, still mute; though he found his voice on the seventh of May, in lovely summer-like weather. The mole-cricket threw up great mountains on the Nower. A lady-bird ventured out. We strolled down to the water-meadows by Milton Court, and picked our hands full of great golden marsh-marigolds. They were nearly over then, though in some years I have marked that very date in my book for their earliest appearance. Alfred Parsons ought to paint the little bog by Milton Court when the marsh-marigolds are at their best. It is one of the lushest and loveliest things I have ever seen anywhere in an English April.

The seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth were wasted in town (no offence meant to the giver of an excellent dinner). On

the twentieth, I saw big buds on the plum-tree by the workhouse wall. (We live next to the workhouse, I may observe parenthetically, so that we won't have far to go when we reach the inevitable last stage of authorship.) Its wild relative, the blackthorn, had been earlier by many days; but then the plum is a Southern type of blackthorn, with a larger and richer fruit and a more delicate constitution. It dreads the chances and changes of our bleak northern climate; it shrinks from cold winds, not quite unmindful of its Asiatic home. Ivy-berries ripened the same day on the wall by Milton mill. It seems at first sight a paradoxical time for a fruit to mellow, early in April, when all the other fruit-trees are engaged in flowering. But the ivy knows its own business best, and helps to keep up in the matter of berries that wider consensus of fauna and flora of whose effects I have already spoken in the case of flowers. It blossoms late in autumn, and as it has a large store of honey freely displayed on a wide open disc, it attracts immense numbers of short-beaked insects, especially flies, so that a perpetual hum buzzes around its tall clusters throughout the flowering season. While winter holds us frost-bound, the berries swell slowly, but as the weather grows warm again in early spring, they begin to soften and blacken, and may generally be found ripe about the second week in April. By that time the birds are getting back to us in fair numbers, and the ivy prepares a welcome for them beforehand, as it counts upon their friendly offices for the dispersal of its tiny triangular nut-like seeds.

The twenty-first brought the earliest wild hyacinths. In another week, Glory Wood was blue with them. Like most other spring flowers of any beauty, the wild hyacinth is a bulb-bearer, because the bulb enables the plant to lay by a good store of digested food-stuffs over winter for the coming year. The bulbous buttercup must have preceded it by several days, though I have no note on my register of its first appearance; and our other English bulb-bearing ranunculus, the lesser celandine, that Wordsworth loved, had opened its golden petals to the chill winds of March some four weeks earlier. The crocuses, daffodils, and narcissuses of our gardens pursue similar tactics, as do also the woodland American lilies and the common orchids of our English meadows.

And, indeed, on the twenty-third I come across a note of the earliest of these last, the male or fool's orchis, the herald of the family. Both it and the green-winged orchis which abounds in

the meadows behind Bury Hill house (where the footpath leads round to the Coldharbour Lane) have stray loose spikes of very few flowers, and blossom in April. The fuller and denser spikes of the spotted orchis take more time, of course, for their preparation, whence they are not ready to unfold till late May or early June. For the season of flowering is never, as the foolish suppose, a mere matter of accident ; it is calculated with the utmost nicety by the mute skill of nature, so as exactly to synchronise with endless other facts in the biological calendar. Life, indeed, is a connected and continuous whole ; one plant or animal can no more live in isolation from the others than the butcher and the baker can live without the aid of the grazier and the ploughman, or than the manufacturer can live without his workmen and his public. It is this sense of community and interdependence between species and species which forms to my mind half the charm of observing nature ; one learns to look upon every act of every plant and animal as reacting upon every other in the vast community of which each is after all but a private citizen.

On the 25th the big black slug, *Arion ater*—forgive one Latin name!—had begun to crawl about the garden in formed bands and to commit his usual depredations on the young shoots of perennials. Poor Arion ! In spite of his musical title he is a subject of much prejudice on the part of gardeners. They object to him merely because he devours their dahlias ! For myself, I confess I am more lenient to this my humble fellow-creature, though I have no doubt hard-hearted critics will seize the opportunity to make merry over the confession. Slugs eat a few young seedlings, it is true, and occasionally do much havoc among the burgeoning shoots of larkspur or marguerites ; but, for my part, I like to see a little animal life in the garden, and am always sorry when I come upon a place so well kept that no work is left for the observant naturalist at all there. Arion in particular is never anything but an object of interest to me, because he is the only English slug that has altogether got rid of his ancestral snail-shell. Other slugs, though externally shell-less to the naked eye, yet carry about within their bodies (out of compliment to Darwin and Tylor) a mere relic of a shell—a shield-like plate, which serves to protect their hearts and lungs from pressing danger. But Arion is a thorough-going radical among slugs, who will have none of these half-hearted compromises and survivals. If he is a slug at all, he will be a slug of the purest type, and will leave all old-fashioned shells and breast-plates to the snails who invented

them. As a consequence, he has to hibernate snugly in warm nooks unseen, and remain in seclusion a little longer into the spring than true snails. I never notice him taking his walks abroad on his one broad foot till some days after the hedgerows have been gay for miles with the banded shells of *Helix nemoralis*.

Few bushes in England are more timid of flowering than the common hawthorn. I have seen the hedges in bloom—here and there, at least—as early as the middle of April, and I have seen them as late as the middle of June. No doubt the buds wait patiently for such weather as will bring out in numbers the particular flies on which, as a rule, they depend for fertilisation. On this year of which I write, I noted the meat-fly abroad on the 24th of April, while the may-blossom broke into bloom on the 27th. For—must I tell the sad truth?—painful as it is to relate, the hawthorn-flowers are fertilised for the most part by carrion insects. A certain undertone of decomposition may be detected by keen nostrils in the scent of may, which is indeed more agreeable in the open air than in a warm room; and it is this curious element in an otherwise delicious and pure perfume that attracts the meat-eating insects—or rather, to be more accurate, the insects that lay their eggs and hatch out their larvae in decaying animal matter. The hawthorn, however, keeps the unpleasant meaty odour well in the background, so that the perfume as a whole is decidedly agreeable in the open air; but many other fly-flowers have it so strongly developed and so well imitated as to be positively nauseous. This is particularly the case with parasitic plants, which often combine with their predatory habits the vile and odious deception of inducing flies to lay eggs on their surface under the hateful pretence of being carrion in an advanced stage of decomposition. Could any flower positively sink lower from its high estate than thus to masquerade in the loathsome disguise of a decaying dead animal?

By the 29th big bats of the night-flying kind were flitting about in the dusk among the swifts and sand-martins. All alike gain their livelihood by hawking after flies on the wing, and all alike resemble one another in many traits of morals and manners. But the great night-flying bat is the last of the trio to appear, or shares that distinction with the swift—partly, I suppose, because he is so very nocturnal in his tastes, and therefore requires a warmer temperature. Of course, on the other hand, he does not migrate, like the swallows and myself, to milder climates, but

winters in England, hibernating in some sheltered cranny where he dozes the cold months away in a torpid condition. His first appearance in spring is thus a very movable feast, as he may be tempted out at any time by a single warm day and a stray chance of flies, and may then retire again if the east winds return too cold for his constitution. The smaller bat, or flittermouse, flies lower and emerges earlier : indeed, Mr. Dallas says flittermice have even been seen on the wing on a sunny day at Christmas-time. I have seldom had the chance of looking for them in England at that melancholy season ; but, as far as I can observe, on the Riviera, they never hibernate at all, but continue to hawk after flies on the wing on warm days throughout the winter.

On the same day the wild strawberry blossomed. It is the earliest English berry-bearer to ripen its fruit ; for the ivy belongs to a different category, and, though seemingly first in the field, is really the latest. It comes in spring before any other, but it flowered over winter, and so should be counted by rights as a belated straggler from the previous season. Something the same might be said, as regards flowers, of many catkins, which are formed with all their stamens and fruits entire in autumn, but only unfold themselves to the carrier breeze with the first warm spring weather. The strawberry, on the contrary, blossoms early, and ripens its fruit by the 10th or 12th of June. Holly, privet, and hawthorn have kept up the succession of bird-food through the winter already ; ivy-berries take it on through the early spring ; and as soon as they are gone, strawberries, raspberries, and mountain-ashes, or rowan-berries, begin to bring forth fruit in due season. If you notice our woods and hedges carefully, you will find there is no time of year when some sort of bird-berry is not fairly abundant. If it were not so, then either our hard-billed birds must all die off of sheer starvation, or else they must migrate *en masse*, as they really do in some severe Northern climates.

The bird-cherry flowered on the last day of the month ; as did also the apple-trees in a neighbour's orchard, thus giving promise of just this unfailing succession of fruits through the coming summer. Cabbage butterflies flitted also on the side of Denbies, and a dragon-fly had cast off his slough or larval skin and come forth in shining mail in search of flying insects near Milton-mill pond. What a wonderful change it must be for him from the cold and muddy water in which he was born, or the slimy bottom on which he crawled through his earlier days, to emerge suddenly by some strange impulse into the clear upper air, and find himself

all at once the admired possessor of veined and gauze-like wings on which he can flit at will through the whole domain of heaven ! And what does he do as soon as he feels his new-born power ? Why, sets off at full flight in hot pursuit after some other and weaker insect to rend it in pieces ! How very human ! One would say, a British sportsman !

So, with the record of the first dragon-fly, my April went out, and May came in next day with her lilies and her orange-tips. Her epic is another one. I will not tell it here. But as I think of all those wonderful life-histories that unfold themselves thus eternally before the watchful eye in the fields and woodlands, I stand aghast with surprise at the foolishness of men that choose rather of deliberate predilection the bare flags of towns, on the singular ground that they see, as they say, ‘more life there’ ! More life, forsooth ! Why, the town is above all things dull, void, and lifeless. Man with his iron heel has killed and crushed all living things (save cab-horses) out of it. No grass by the road-sides ; no bronze-covered beetles in the holes and crannies of the grim grey curb-stones ! *Solitudinem faciunt ; urbem appellant.* But give me the populous world of the hedgerows ! In the country, life meets your gaze at every turn, and every living creature that greets your eye has a story of his own to tell that is well worth your hearing. The drama of nature runs through five acts daily. The epic of the months sings itself ever in your ears—you have only to stop still and listen to its music. But perhaps you prefer the London Pavilion.

GRANT ALLEN.

Dickson, Teamster.

THAT night he had camped on the other side of the McKinlay—not more than a hundred yards from its edge. It was hardly a wise thing to do, in this way, that it left the steep and dangerous descent to the river's bed the first work in the morning for the freshened team, but Dickson had never realised the practical points of a team-driver's life, although he had known how to handle a four-in-hand to perfection in the old days at home.

When he had unharnessed and attended to his mules, he knelt down upon the ground and built up a little pile of sticks, which he presently lit and sat down by to eat his supper.

He had gone through the routine of the evening in a dreamy and mechanical way, as though he accepted it as necessary, apparently taking little care for it, or maybe for anything else. And as his head bent towards the dying embers, the eyes that were fixed upon them showed that strange inward look which is so often seen in the eyes of those who lead solitary lives.

It is a rough calling, that of a teamster in North Australia; and the regular hand at it is generally a man of a rough and wild character; one who on his journey through the bush is a singer of ribald songs, and whose language is almost by necessity expletive, for the reason that he has forgotten how to use any other; and it, in its senseless coarseness, is characteristic of the life now. Not infrequently there are to be found men amongst them who are of a dejected and taciturn manner; but these men make no friends for themselves, and have little enough to say to anyone.

The teamster Dickson was a man of the last description, therefore the custom of driving in company with one or more wagons, and all making for the same camping-place at night, had never been followed by him.

He watched the smouldering fire until there was only a tiny

heap of white ashes left, with a few charred and smoking sticks lying round the outer edges. He lit his pipe with one of these presently and got up and stretched his cramped limbs before he crept into his box-shaped hammock, that was slung between two trees. He crept into it almost as a fugitive, and hastily closed the entrance, for the mosquitoes were rampant outside, and he could hear their angry ping-ping as he fell asleep.

From the McKinlay's bank the great bamboos bent, with swishing rustle, to the fitful night breeze, and the broad, flag-like leaves of a heavy-fruited screw-palm shivered as it swept through them; from the thick foliage came the ceaseless chirrup of the tree-frogs, and large moths fluttered heavily past. And the moon ruled the almost visible silence above the even, sombre scrub, save where a gaunt white-limbed gum stretched its branches skywards, like an irregular tracerу of bleached bones. In that clear light, shadows fell blackly silhouetted on the ground, and the outline of Dickson's hammock fell so sharply that it looked like a coffin lying there.

One evening in mid-autumn two people walked beneath the elms in Kensington Gardens; the man slowly, as if loth to lessen the distance and end the time; the girl, with perceptible impatience, was always one or two paces in advance of him.

The setting sun shed an effulgent light across the sky, burnishing the two or three clouds that hung immediately above and near his disc, until they looked like huge glorified nuggets, while his rays streamed lengthening through the golden glory of the elms. Presently a stronger breath of wind stirred the yellow foliage above them and sent a shower of butterfly-like leaves floating slowly to the ground. The girl laughed as they fell.

'You laugh, Joan.'

'The leaves lend themselves so appropriately to the situation,' she replied. 'They seem like fancies, Sir John,' she said more gravely. 'They are pretty when they come, pretty while they last, even as they fall, until—' Looking down, she pushed her parasol through the brown decaying vegetation underfoot—'until—oh, well, this!'

'Joan,' the man said, 'I really cannot believe you have asked me to meet you here only to tell me that our engagement must end. Why, it's madness, darling!' he exclaimed. 'Everything has fallen in just lately to make our marriage possible. I can

offer you a charming home and wealth—indeed, everything that a woman could wish for—and love, Joan. Why, you don't know how I love you, darling!' He paused, and they walked on silently over the rustling leaves. 'When,' he went on, with a little tremble in his voice—"when you sent word you particularly wanted to see me alone here, I thought we might have talked about our marriage, Joan.'

'No,' she said stiffly, and drawing her pretty lips together in a determined line—"no, I don't want to marry you.'

'Why not, Joan? What have I done that you should end our engagement for a mere whim?'

'You haven't done anything, Sir John. I tell you I am tired of it! I don't want to marry anybody—and—and—you're so terribly in earnest about everything that I think—well, I think—you bore me.'

He flushed deeply, and said in a quiet voice, 'If that is so, Joan, it is as well that I should know; but what will your people say about it? They will hardly care about accepting your excuse.'

She blushed and laughed as she answered, 'My people will be angry, Sir John,' with emphasis on the name, 'naturally! But it will blow over.'

'In that case, all I have to do is to settle up my affairs and leave England,' he said bitterly.

'It isn't necessary for you to make any sacrifice of that kind, Sir John. It really would be rather a pity,' she went on reflectively. 'Surely London is large enough for us both?'

'No, it isn't, Joan. A man who is "so terribly in earnest about everything" takes even jilting in earnest!'

'That word has an unpleasant sound, Sir John.'

'Has it?' he replied shortly.

'I don't think there is anything else to say now, but good-bye.' She held out her hand and pushed a little parcel into his. He took it mechanically, and walked on beside her like a man in sleep.

'Oh!' she exclaimed as they passed between the posts on to Kensington Gore, 'will you stop that hansom for me?' 'Thank you,' she said as she stepped lightly into it. 'And good-bye again. Oh!' leaning forward, 'tell him where to drive, please.'

Very early next morning Dickson was ready to go on his

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journey, and he held the reins gathered up in one hand, while the other was raised to pull himself up to the driver's seat, his knees resting on the footboard, when the leaders of his team made a sudden start forwards, which jerked him backwards off the wagon, and he fell with his arms and legs entangled by the reins.

In his struggles to free himself he only added to the fear of the now terrified mules, and they rushed forward again, making for the track, and along it went straight away for the McKinlay crossing. On the edge of the river's bank they swerved to the left, and racing down the cutting made sideways to the bed; and the loaded wagon behind them rocked from side to side and almost overturned with the impetus of the descent, while Dickson was dragged on withal. As they crashed over the pebbles and sand of the dry river's bed and up the dusty wheel-ploughed track of the other bank, some bags of chaff, loosened from their fastenings, rolled off the load; and the team blundered senselessly along, almost hidden in the choking volumes of black dust.

Soon after they reached the top of the bank the reins broke, and Dickson was left lying bruised and insensible across the track. For three long hours he lay there, while the sun grew hotter every moment above him.

A little further on the wagon had become jammed against a log, and the mules, as quiet as sheep now, stood tamely blinking by it.

At last a man, on his way down from Pine Creek, rode up to the spot, and when he saw Dickson he jumped off his horse quickly, calling out loudly at the same time, 'Holloa, mate, what's up?' Receiving no answer, he poured some whisky between his lips, and with much difficulty moved him to the shade of a tree. Then he freed the mules from their broken harness, and they wandered away biting at the heads of the tall grass as they went.

Dickson, who had revived a little, followed the new comer with dazed and dreamy eyes, though now and then he glanced at his maimed and broken limbs which lay stretched out before him, so cold and numb, seeming no longer to belong to him.

The other man came back presently and said, 'Now then, matey, I'm going off to see if I can get a cart to carry you on to the hospital.'

He lay alone again, while the sun blazed and burned pitilessly through the weary hours, and as the shade under which he lay moved slowly, he now and then with an effort dragged himself with it. A little brown lizard ran out from beneath some loose bark and

crept cautiously up on his chest. It rested there for a moment or two and stared with black, inquisitive eyes into his face. One of the mules, its throat bell tinkling as it moved, came close up to him, and gave two or three sniffs and tossed its head with a contemptuous snort as it turned away again to feed. The air was rife with gorgeous insects, and the shimmering wings of the dragon-flies dazzled his weary eyes as they glittered and flashed like bits of silver gauze in the sun.

The man returned with the cart at last, and he had also brought a companion to help him. When together they had lifted Dickson into it, he lay along the floor in a dead swoon from the agony of being moved.

It was a long drive of thirty miles to the hospital, over rough and water-rutted roads; over stony ranges where the wheels sometimes jarred upon the larger boulders, grinding harshly upon their sides; or again, when balanced on top for a second, the cart, all side-tilted, would come back to the track with a dull jerk; over treeless flats, where they sank axle-deep into grey powdery dust, which rose up and shrouded them as they ploughed through it and, following in their wake, lingered motionless as a fog on the still evening air.

The two men seated in the cart were silent, though now and then as one or the other looked down at Dickson, he would meet the eyes of his companion after with a shake of the head and tilt upwards of the chin.

It was dusk when they reached the hospital—a long low building made of ‘cypress pine’ framing and corrugated iron. There were wings at each end, the gables of which made it look less like a shed, and a wide bamboo-latticed verandah ran round it, which had many shuttered windows. From these some patients leant in their light pyjama suits as they smoked, while upon the verandah there were others lying on the lounges. A yellow tecoma trailed above the entrance, and some of its blossoms were shed as the hot evening air thrilled through the heavy flower clusters. The scarlet blooms were closing on the hibiscus shrubs outside, closing to die, after having bravely flaunted their gorgeous petals all day long in the fierce sun-rays.

They could do very little to relieve Dickson, although he lived for many days—at first in unconscious silence, when life seemed almost dormant, and afterwards in a fevered delirium; and sometimes, through the almost indistinct mutterings, the words, ‘Joan

—Joan—you—don’t—know how—I love you—darling!’ would be heard. And again, when his thin, restless hands wandered to grope for a little gold chain that lay fastened round his neck, from which hung a woman’s diamond ring, the raftered roof of the hospital echoed the wild bursts of laughter and the cry, ‘Joan, Joan,’ and the voice would as suddenly fall to recite piteously, ‘In—all time—of our tribulation—in all time—of our wealth—in—the—hour—of—death,’ and for a few moments there would be silence.

It was easy to gather some threads of the story together, for the voice, manner, and allusion to places and people told of widely different past associations in the teamster’s life. And a woman had driven him out to this—to a blighted life, and oblivion in the wilderness of the Australian Bush!

For some time any attempt to discover his real name would arouse his suspicion, and for the moment, when questioned, he gained strength of mind to control his speech. But late one evening, when the nurse was standing by his bed, and the doors of the ward opposite to it stood wide open, and through them the hot wind blew softly; while the other patients now lay asleep beneath the white folds of their mosquito nets, and a lamp hung from the centre beam of the ward, its light turned low, and threw up on the bare iron roof above a clear circle of light, within whose ring two white efts chased the moths and night-flies that had come to the glow. Presently they tussled for an insect one had caught, and both, while fighting to possess it, fell from the roof to the floor near Dickson’s bed.

The sound roused him, and he opened his eyes and spoke quite sensibly to his companion—‘I’ve been rather queer, nurse, haven’t I?’—raising his hand to his head—‘Talked a lot of nonsense, eh?’ Then murmuring to himself, ‘It can’t matter much now, anyhow; the game’s close up!’

‘Dickson,’ the nurse said, seeing that the opportunity had come when they hoped to find his lips less firmly sealed, ‘the doctor says you must tell us your own name.’

‘Why does he want to know it?’ he said languidly.

‘You see, Dickson, he is responsible for all the people who come into his care; and I feel sure there can be no reason why you should mind telling it.’

‘No —there isn’t any reason—now, nurse; but tell me—have I talked—about anyone else?’ he asked anxiously.

'Sometimes, Dickson ; but you only said a Christian name.'

He looked relieved, and then went on :

'Nurse, before—they—carry me—through—the doors,' raising his hand a little, 'I want—you—to take this,' touching the ring that hung suspended from his neck. 'It was—*hers*—once, nurse.' He paused. 'I should like—you—to—keep—it. Will you ?'

He seemed getting weaker again, and the nurse hurriedly said :

'You haven't told me the name yet, Dickson.'

'The—the—name—oh ! This is—the—last tangible link,' fingering the ring, 'nurse, with the past. You—will—promise to take—it, nurse, when—'

'Dickson, tell me your name, my good man, and I will do anything you ask.'

'The—the—name ? Oh ! my name !' He turned his head to the wall, as though still reluctant to break his heart-worn resolve to keep unknown ; then passing his hand wearily across his forehead, replied faintly, 'My name—is—is—Sir John—Temple, nurse.'

In four days from this time they carried him through the doors of the little iron hospital in the silence before the dawn, and gave him the simple burial he had wished for.

Over the fragrance of last year's fallen leaves and dead bark, whose crushing scents the air, and past two or three of the great yellow ant-nests, that rise up like columns and tower overhead to a height of twenty feet and more, and that give to many of the scenes here a wild solemnity, and add a deeper sense of mystery and desolation to the bush ; along the scarce-used track, marked only by blazed gums, and across the stony ridge, his body's bearers went to the hill-top where, in the 'Cemetery Lot,' four graves now lie side by side. No headstones name their tenants ; there is nothing to tell—nothing save the slight heaving grass-grown mounds of three ; and beneath the last—a shining yellow heap of newly unearthed clay thrown high—the earthly remains of the life-tired teamster rest.

MURRAY EYRE.

The First English Book Sale.

THERE are many points in the history of books and of book-collecting which are still tantalisingly obscure. How little we know about the prices of early books, the cost of printing, the relations of printer and publisher or of publisher and author! With the exception of a few royal personages and a few men and women of great wealth and rank, the book-collectors of the two centuries which succeeded the invention of printing are hardly known to us, even by name. A few have gained immortality among book-lovers by clothing their books in priceless bindings; others, like Sir Thomas Bodley, have won a nobler renown by founding libraries in which students should have free access to their treasures. But of the rank and file of the early collectors, the men who bought books not by the cartload, but with individual thought and care, according to the length of purses easily exhaustible—of these for two centuries we know little or nothing. If it had not been for an indiscreet pamphlet published by an English theologian in Holland, our ignorance about English book-collectors might have lasted indefinitely longer. But during his brief stay in his native land the pamphleteer introduced into this country the custom of selling by auction the books of dead collectors, and from the year 1676, when this practice was first adopted, our knowledge about English libraries becomes abundant.

It is not a little curious, in itself that we should be able to say with precision that at nine o'clock of the morning, on October 31, 1676, at the house of Dr. Lazarus Seaman, in Warwick Court, Warwick Lane, began the first book auction that ever took place in England. But we can do much more than this. The little world of book-collectors was immensely taken with this new method of book-buying. The catalogues of the first auctions soon came to be regarded as curiosities, and the price fetched by each lot was carefully recorded. The auctioneers were no less interested. They wrote prefaces to the catalogue of each sale, giving

us their reasons for the various auction rules, which soon came to assume a form closely similar to those now in use at Sotheby's or Puttick & Simpson's. Moreover, at the end of ten years Thomas Cooper, the leading auctioneer of the time, printed an exact list of the seventy-three sales which had taken place since the introduction of the practice into England, and eleven years later another famous member of the fraternity wrote the following letter, which has recently been acquired by the British Museum, and supplies us with the one link which was needed to complete our chain of information on the subject.

The letter forms part of the 'Dering Correspondence,' which stretches from the reign of James the First to that of George the Second (Stowe MS. 709). It has the double endorsement: (i) 'Mr. Millington, the noted auctioneer, to Mr. Jos. Hill,' and (ii) 'Millington's letter acknowledginge the usefulness of sellinge Libraryes by Auction.' Here is the text of the part which now concerns us:

Lond. June 25, 1697.

'Reverend Sr,

'I have designd severall Times to wait of [sic] you when in England to present my service and tender my thanks for your great Service done to Learning & Learned men in your first advising & effectuallly setting on foot that admirable & univer-sally approved of way of selling Librarys by Auction amongst us. A son of a worthy ffreind of mine, being now in Rotterdam in order to get some Employment there, offering me the Conveyance of mine to your hand, I presume of your Candour to receive my acknowledgements and gratefull Resentments for the knowledge I have got and the benefit I have received by their management, having for severall yeares strenuously Pursued what you, sire, happily *Introduced the Practice of into England*. I Design you some Catalogues of the Library of Dr Edward Bernard, late Astronomy Professor in Oxford, in which you will find Curious Manuscripts, Libri Impressi collati cum Codicibus MSS., etc.'

The letter proceeds to enlarge at some length on Dr. Bernard's books, the best part of which, by the way, had been presented to the Bodleian, and then, with an apology for the writer's presumption in addressing Dr. Hill, is duly signed, 'Your obliged humble servant, D. Millington.' It tells us, it will be observed, with the aid of the emphatic underscoring here represented by italics, that it was Dr. Hill who had 'first advised and effectuallly set on foot that admirable and universally approved of way of selling libraries

by auction amongst us,' and we can see exactly how he came to start the practice.

Joseph Hill was one of the most earnest and the most moderate of the seventeenth-century Presbyterians. His father, Joshua, is said to have died a few minutes before the archbishop's apprisor arrived to cite him for not wearing a surplice; but though the objection to Church discipline was thus hereditary, it does not seem to have been intensified in Joseph. A distinguished career at Cambridge was closed by his refusal to take the oath enjoined by the Act of Uniformity in 1662, and the University authorities 'cut his name out of the books in kindness to him,' to prevent his being formally ejected from his offices. Hill took refuge at Leyden, and was soon appointed to the charge of the Scottish Church at Middleburg in Zeeland. But though a refugee, he remained English at heart, and in 1672 wrote a pamphlet, entitled 'The Interest of these United Provinces, being a Defence of the Zeelander's Choice.' It will be remembered that by the secret Treaty of Dover, concluded between Charles II. and the French king in 1670, Charles was to aid Louis against the Dutch, and receive as part of his reward the province of Zeeland. The French invasion took place in 1672, and it was at this crisis that Hill wrote his pamphlet, which contains a defence of the English king. Though completed on November 30, 1672, it did not appear till April of the next year, when the author at last obtained a publisher, though at the cost of no less a sum than one hundred pounds. In the following August he was ordered to leave Zeeland till the war was over, and on returning to England was rewarded by Charles with a pension of 80*l.*, and the offer of a bishopric as the price of his conformity. The offer was declined, and in 1678 Hill returned to Holland, accepting a post at Rotterdam, where we find him when the grateful Millington wrote his letter of acknowledgment in 1695, and where he died in 1707.

When Hill came over to receive the reward of his patriotism in England, he would naturally have revived his acquaintance with an old Cambridge don, Dr. Lazarus Seaman, with whom he had many tastes in common. Seaman had been Master of Peterhouse and Vice-Chancellor of the University. He had written pamphlets endeavouring to keep the Presbyterians in the Church by minimising the importance of episcopal orders, and was just on the right side of the line which shut Hill out from the proffered bishopric. Both were book collectors, both were classical scholars, and when Seaman died during Hill's stay in London, we may be quite sure that Hill was among his mourners.

Seaman's funeral was no small affair. Two broadsides of not wholly despicable verse still exist to attest his popularity. One is entitled 'An Elegie to the endeared Memory of that Learned and Reverend Minister of the Gospel, Dr. Lazarus Seaman, who died on Friday, the 3rd of September, 1675, and was carried from Drapers' Hall to be interred, with a numerous train of Christian friends bewailing his Death.' The other broadside, which contains the better verse, is more simply inscribed 'An Elegy on the Reverend and Learned Divine, Dr. Lazarus Seaman, sometime Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, Master of Peterhouse, and late Minister of the Gospel in All Hallows, Bread Street.' Even of this, however, the first six lines may suffice as a specimen :

What ! Seaman dead ! and did no blazing star,
No comet b^eforehand his Death declare ?
What, Merlin, not a word of this in thee ?
Lilly's but half a prophet now I see :
For had he known it, he'd have quickly said,
This year Presb^ytery shall lose its head.

In no less conceited a vein, but more successful, is the proposed epitaph, the last line of which is really an inspiration :

Reader, if that thou learned art,
O do not urge me to impart
What 'tis I cover ; for I fear
Thou'l^t be so eager to lie here,
And wish thy life might straight expire.
Then ask no more, but away go
And send th' unlearned, they may know.
I'll tell none else, for here does lie
Entomb'd a University.

Thus was the worthy doctor bewailed and buried, and soon his executors were busy realising his effects. What was to be done with his five or six thousand books ? He had bequeathed them to no library, and to sell them to the booksellers was to give them away. It was here, then, that Dr. Hill stepped in and 'advised and effectually set on foot that admirable and universally approved of way of selling libraries by auction,' which had long been the practice in Holland, but as yet was quite unknown in this country. The arrangements were soon made, and a catalogue duly printed, for whose title-page no less learned a language than Latin would serve, though we regret to have to note that the worthy William Cooper who compiled it was a sufficiently poor scholar to head one

of his sections, *Bibliae Variae*, as if *Biblia* were a feminine noun of the first declension. The Latin of the title-page is of a kind which every one can read, so that for the sake of completeness we quote it as it stands :—

‘ Catalogus variorum & insignium librorum instructissimæ bibliothecæ clarissimi doctissimiq; viri Lazari Seaman, S.T.D., quorum Auctio habebitur Londoni in ædibus Defuncti in Area & Viculo Warwicensi, Octobris ultimo. Cura Gulielmi Cooper Bibliopolæ.’

Probably under Dr. Hill’s guidance Cooper also drew up the following preface, the rules given in which, as we have already noted, are the progenitors of those still in use in the present day, in which, indeed, some of their actual phrases may be found enshrined.

‘ To the Reader.

‘ Reader,

‘ It hath not been usual here in *England* to make sales of Books by way of *Auction*, or *who will give most for them* : But it having been practised in other Countreys to the Advantage both of Buyers and Sellers ; It was therefore conceived (for the encouragement of Learning) to publish the Sale of these Books, this manner of way ; and it is hoped that this will not be unacceptable to Schollers ; and therefore we thought it convenient to give an Advertisement concerning the manner of proceeding therein.

‘ *First*, That having this Catalogue of the Books, and their Editions under their several Heads and Numbers, it will be more easie for any Person of Quality, Gentlemen, or others, to Depute any one to Buy such Books for them as they shall desire, if their occasions will not permit them to be present at the Auction themselves.

‘ *Secondly*, That those which bid most are the Buyers ; and if any manifest differences should arise, that then the same book or books shall be forthwith exposed again to Sale, and the highest bidder to have the same.

‘ *Thirdly*, That all the Books according to the Catalogue are (for so much as we know) perfect, and sold as such ; But if any of them appear to be otherwise before they be taken away, the Buyer shall have his choice of taking or leaving the same.

‘ *Fourthly*, That the money for the Books bought, be paid at the delivery of them, within one Month’s time after the Auction is ended.

'Fifthly, That the Auction will begin the 31st of October at the Deceased Dr.'s House in Warwick Court in Warwick lane, punctually at Nine of the Clock in the Morning, and Two in the Afternoon, and this to continue daily until all the Books be sold ; Wherefore it is desired that the Gentlemen, or those Deputed by them, may be there precisely at the Hours appointed, lest they should miss the opportunity of Buying these Books, which either themselves or their Friends desire.'

In subsequent auctions these rules were repeated, with but slight alterations and the addition of a 'Lastly' to the effect that

'If any Gentleman have a desire to view or see any or all of these Books in this Catalogue, or to satisfie themselves in the Conditions and Editions of any of them, they shall be very Welcome to the place aforesigned at any time before the day that the Sale begins.'

To facilitate this inspection subsequent sales were held, not at the deceased collector's house, but at some more convenient place, that from which this rule is quoted, Kidner's sale (February 6, 1677), taking place 'at the sign of the King's head in Little Britain,' possibly a tavern, but more probably the name of the bookseller's shop. It is to Dr. Seaman's house, however, in Warwick Court, that we must take our way at nine o'clock on the morning of October 31, 1676, if we wish to be present at the first English book sale. We shall have Cooper's catalogue in our hands, and note that he has inaugurated the practice, which still makes auction catalogues as difficult to consult as a Bradshaw, of dividing according to their sizes books in folio, in quarto, in octavo, and in duodecimo. He further divides each size of books according to their subjects : *Patres Græci*, *Patres Latini*, *Biblia*, *Libri Theologici*, *Theologi Scholastici*, *Scriptores in Scripturam*, &c., so that we have no little difficulty in finding out if the particular books of which we are in want are included in the good Doctor's library. As we enter the house we probably find it very full. There are friends of Dr. Seaman's anxious for his books to sell well ; poor Divinity students hopeful of picking up a few volumes cheaply ; professed book-collectors, who care little for theology, but have an eye on some of the classics, and are curious to see how this new departure will succeed ; and a little knot of booksellers, also curious, but on the whole unfriendly. Will. Cooper ascends an impromptu rostrum, an assistant hands up a long set of the works of St. Chrysostom, in Greek and Latin (Paris, 1636), and the bidding begins. If any invocation would persuade the Muse of Learning to tell us

'who first, who last upraised his voice to bid,' that invocation should duly be made. But in the absence of documents the Muse usually abandons us severely to our own imagination, and we are left to wonder whether it was friend, or poor student, or rich collector who made the first bid at the first English book auction. Probably it was one of the last class who secured the prize, for the great Chrysostom fetched no less than 8*l.* 5*s.*, nearly a quarter's income for some of the poorer clergy of those days. This was the highest price fetched by any book in the sale, but its immediate successors were all respectable. A set of the records of General and Provincial Councils (Paris, 1636) fetched 5*l.* 3*s.*; the works of St. Cyril (Paris, 1638), 5*l.* 1*s.*; of Theodoret (1642), 4*l.* 8*s.*, and of Epiphanius (1622), 3*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* Thus the first five lots produced twenty-six pounds all but sixpence, and it may greatly be doubted whether, despite the smaller purchasing power of money in these days, they would fetch as much as this if put up to auction at any of our modern sales.

The next twenty books averaged something over a pound apiece, and the prices languished till this division of the sale was over, and the *Patres Græci* were succeeded by the *Patres Latini*, the works of St. Augustine (Froben's edition, 1569) heading the list at 5*l.* 15*s.* Among the editions of the Bible, *Bibliae variae*, as the auctioneer called them, the London Polyglot of 1657 was *facile princeps*, fetching no less than 8*l.* 2*s.*, or within three shillings of the top price of the sale. Rabbinical literature was the next division taken, and here it is curious to note that no single work fetched as much as a sovereign. Then came long rows of classics and theology, with nothing to call for remark till we come to the books of English divinity, among which Fox's *Martyrs* (London, 1641) fetched as much as 3*l.* 5*s.* Among the English philologists, a very miscellaneous section, Raleigh's *History of the World* went for 1*l.* 6*s.*, and Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (Oxford, 1638) for 6*s.* Even the latter was not much of a bargain, for it is the first edition (1621), the one in quarto, which is now so highly prized.

When the folios were all sold, the smaller sizes were taken in their order, but either the collectors of the seventeenth century (very unlike in this to their modern successors) valued a book in proportion to its bulk, or else the novelty of the bidding was exhausted. Certainly we have no more high prices to record, and the auctioneer, after a time, had recourse to selling books in bundles or batches. The Oriental works went badly, probably because few could read them; the English divinity, which were

sold ten and twenty together, at from a florin to fifteen shillings the lot, even worse, because Dr. Seaman's theology was now discredited by Churchmen, and the pockets of the Dissenters were ill furnished. We note a few pearls among these dusty tomes. Fletcher's *Purple Island* (1633) was sold with six dull tracts for 5s., and Bacon's *Advancement of Learning* (1605) for 1s. The pamphlets of the Civil War went fairly well, but a collection, which would now be held priceless, of thirty-two tracts on the relation of England and Spain from 1585 to 1591 realised no more than 8s.

The total sum gained by the sale is stated as about 700*l.*, a result which I have not had the industry to check by adding together the prices of all the different lots. My impression is that it is rather an under-estimate. Taking it as correct, we may guess the average sum realised by each book as about 3s., for there are 137 pages in the Catalogue, and from thirty-five books catalogued on each page, or a total of somewhere about 5,000. A scholar's library, especially a theological scholar's, always sells badly—unless I am mistaken, Bishop Thirlwall's books only averaged about 2s. each—and Dr. Seaman's executors probably congratulated themselves on the result of this new method of disposing of old books. They had realised more than could possibly have been obtained on an enforced sale to a single bookseller, and on the other hand, after the ardour of competition for the first few lots had subsided, buyers were able to make bargains which the booksellers would never have allowed them. Every one, save the booksellers, was pleased, and both the general satisfaction and the one discordant note which marred it, are reflected in the preface which the auctioneer wrote for the second book sale, which took place some four months after the first. Here he says :

'The first Attempt in this kind (by the Sale of Dr. Seaman's Library) having given great Content and Satisfaction to the Gentlemen who were the Buyers, and no great Discouragement to the Sellers, hath Encouraged the making this second Trial, by the exposing (to Auction or Sale) the Library of Mr. Tho. Kidner, in hopes of receiving such Encouragement from the Learned as may prevent the Stifling of this manner of Sale, the Benefit (if rightly considered) being equally Balanced between Buyer and Seller.'

There was a danger, we see, of this manner of sale being 'stifled,' and subsequent prefaces show us that the danger came from reports spread by the retail booksellers that the bidding was not always genuine. To meet these reports the auctioneers for

a long time refused to accept commissions to bid themselves, lest they should be accused of bidding when there was no commission behind them, merely to run up prices against genuine purchasers. A new rule was also passed, obliging strangers from the country either to pay for and remove books as soon as they were knocked down to them, or else to bid through citizens of reputation, 'and this is the rather desired that all suspicions may be removed of any Strangers appearing there to bid and enhance the Price to others without ever intending to send for what they so buy themselves.'

Fenced round with these regulations, the institution of selling books by auction grew and flourished, so that, as we have said, at the end of the first ten years of its existence no less than seventy-three such auctions had taken place. It has certainly made book-collecting a more exciting and more picturesque practice than it could otherwise have been, and enables us not only to reconstruct the library of any famous collector, but often to trace the history of a particular book in a very pleasant and interesting manner. Thus the copy of Dr. Seaman's Catalogue and the two Elegies on his death, at which we have been looking, all once belonged to Narcissus Luttrell, the author of *Brief Historical Relation of State Affairs*, 1678–1714. According to the crabbed notes of the antiquary Hearne, whom he had offended by refusing to lend him books, Luttrell was not only a book-collector but a miser, who would not have given the judges and other dignitaries who attended his funeral (in 1732) 'a meal's meat' while he was alive. But he was 'well-known for his curious library, especially for the number and scarcity of [books on] English history and antiquities, which he collected in a lucky hour at very reasonable rates.' After Luttrell's death, his copy of Seaman's Catalogue passed into the collection of the antiquary Gough, and then into that of the celebrated Richard Heber, perhaps the greatest of all English book-collectors. At Heber's sale it was acquired by the British Museum, and its literary pedigree thereby closed. But the possession of such a pedigree adds very greatly to the interest of a book in the eyes of book-lovers, and so far as the institution of sales by auction has increased our knowledge of the book-collectors of the past, we have every reason to be grateful to Dr. Joseph Hill who, to return to our text, 'first advised and effectually set on foot that admirable and universally approved of way of selling libraries.'

ALFRED W. POLLARD.

At the Sign of the Ship.

SEVERAL years ago I wrote, in LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE, a little paper, called 'My Friend the Beach-comber.' The Beach-comber, as described there, was a fancy sketch; but all the anecdotes of wild life, save one, were true yarns, told at various times by my friend and kinsman. He has lately sent me the following observations on sharks, and the account of the shark as a water retriever is certainly novel. Indeed, a new light is shed on sharks in general, and, as a sample of this unamiable fish has just been brought hither from the sands of St. Andrews, one's attention is drawn to their manners and customs:—

'I had a queer fish adventure the other day, fishing off the sea rocks for "leather jackets," a fine eating sort of sea perch. Had been hauling them in after playing them with rod and reel in my most scientific manner. They would take the hook, and, on feeling it, rush off to the pleasant sound of the whirring wheel into deep water, when with much and gentle pains I would coax them to my feet and landing net. At length having hooked a big fellow, I was much surprised, after his rush away, to feel my line suddenly slacken, and then to perceive him come right up nearly to my feet. For a moment I fancied I must unwittingly have made some extra scientific move derived from my piscatorial reading; when suddenly I saw behind my poor perch a long lithe young shark, who only halted when within a few yards of me. Strange to say, he remained about the whole afternoon, and every time I caught a perch who rushed into the deeper water, he sent him back nearly to my feet; the strangest retriever man ever had. Of course, what attracted him was the unnatural movement of the hooked and wounded fish, showing undue white glint of belly. But fish depend most on hearing, water conveying sound rapidly and well. Once in a bay (a half circle, half a mile long) I was sitting gun in hand on one of its boundary cliffs, watching for a shot at a shark just under me; my boat was at the other extremity

(half a mile away), and I saw one of the boys drop gently from it into the water. The shark *heard* him at the same moment, and went off then in a bee line. *Il faut dire* that the day was exceeding calm and quiet. The boy had luckily got into water where he had not to swim before the brute got up to him, and he took it very coolly, only turning round and facing him as he circled round him, like a small trout round a big grasshopper, and splashing the water towards him to frighten him. He escaped, as I have myself once escaped after a boat capsized, a mile from shore, when three of them accompanied us to shore in the most (seemingly) friendly manner. But they are not to be trusted. You will come across *foolhardy* young fellows who will tackle anything, and once they have tasted blood will not be driven away. A shoal of young sharks is for this reason the most dangerous thing—far worse than an old fellow, unless a harbour man-eater. I once saw the remains of a white man who had been literally torn into pieces in quite shallow water by some half a dozen young fellows. Feeding in their youth in shoals, and having thus to fight for each morsel, gives them the same habit as other associated feeders ; that is, when they have grabbed a piece they rush away with it to devour it, and then come back. They carry the habit into older age too. I saw a native killed in Lifu, in a white coral-sanded beach where the natives had never before seen a shark. There were a hundred natives bathing, water only five feet deep, when a shark sailed in, and took a man away from between two women. He bit off a leg and rushed away, swallowed it, came back, and took off an arm, and away again. By this time they had got a canoe in water and were dragging the body on board, when he rushed at it again, and then followed the boat to shore. Here from the surrounding rocks, as he darted here and there, the niggers literally riddled him with spears till he was like a porcupine, and then he did not seem to go away on account of that. In fact, don't trust sharks ; but their proverbial ferocity is an exaggeration, at least for all the species I know, which, of course, is not all. It reminds me that once when we had thrown dynamite in a deep recess among the rocks that bounded the shore (the water was deep, say nearly four fathoms, the place narrow and long), and a lot of native women dived in to get the big dead mullet at the bottom, while they were all down below, we above saw a big white shark sail slowly right among the women, and begin quietly picking up the mullet too !

* * *

Speaking of fish reminds one of Richard Franck, philanthropist, whose early work, on a fishing tour from the Esk to the Naver, was edited by Sir Walter Scott. The name of the work is *Northern Memoirs*, written in 1658, and reprinted in 1826. Franck had been a Cromwellian trooper; he had met Izaak Walton, and despised him as a sporting authority. He himself was an excellent angler, but a bad writer. He also wrote *Rabbi Moses, a Philosophical Treatise of the Origin and Production of Things* (1687). This I have never seen, but Scott speaks of it as an unreadable and mystic rhapsody. There is a copy of it in the Abbotsford Library, which has none of Franck's third book, '*The Admirable and Indefatigable Adventures of the Nine Pious Pilgrims, Devoted to Sion by the Cross of Christ, and Piloted by Evangelist to the New Jerusalem*. Written in America, in a time of Solitude and divine Contemplation. London, 1708.' The book is excessively dull, but I felt certain that Franck could not keep fishing altogether out of his dismal allegory. And verily, on p. 163, we find one of his pilgrims by 'a water so clear and transparently bright, you might see the bottom and the fish that swam in it . . . so I stript up my sleeve, and thrusting down my hand, I seized a trout, a most lovely trout, which I carried with me to the next shady tree, where I got some sticks that by rubbing together and chafing them one against the other, the fire at last began to fly out; which I gathered together, and laid it on a heap to broil my fish, which I afterwards eat.' The speaker is a lady, Chastity indeed, and may be excused for taking trout by tickling. But how much better would it have been had Franck, when he fled from the Man, even Charles Stuart, to America, written another book about fishing in the colony, instead of a pilgrimage so unlike that of Bunyan! Is anything known in America about Richard Franck? 'American papers, please copy.' He was a curious character, an excellent angler, and speaks with fairness and generosity about the opponent of his party, Montrose. Perhaps he returned to England, where all his books were published. He must have been a very old man in 1708.

* * *

Curious things are done in examinations. One examiner tells me that he asked a simple question or two on an English poem taken up by some of the candidates. They could not answer, but one of them remarked, 'We were told we need not read the

poem—it would be enough to read the notes.' How very modern that is, and what a satire on modern education and examinations! Another candidate was asked something about contemporary notices of Shakespeare. All his companions came out with the Shakescene anecdote, as if they had met it in their original researches. One wrote: 'We have been told lately, till we are sick to death of hearing it, that Robert Green,' and so on with the rest of the information. This was candid, at all events.

* *

Miss Millard, of Teddington, that mighty book-hunter, informs me that she can discover no trace of a copy of Scott's edition of Shakespeare, done between 1824 and 1826. 'Three volumes of the edition,' says Mr. Constable in his Memoirs of his father, 'were completed before the sad crisis in 1826, but then laid aside; and ultimately, I have been told, the sheets were sold in London as waste paper. If Volume I. really included a life of Shakespeare, this is extremely to be regretted; but that volume, Constable says, would be the last printed. Lockhart asked for a copy of Johnson's and Steevens's edition 'interleaved with quarto paper.' The edition of 1803 is in the Abbotsford Catalogue, but nothing is said about manuscript notes, which that excellent Catalogue mentions where they occur. It is to be feared that the work is totally lost, though I seem to have heard that there is a copy somewhere in America. Mr. Furness may know. If found it should be made a note of, as Scott was so familiar with Elizabethan dramatic literature that his notes cannot be without value. On September 20, 1825, Constable mentions that the printing of the book 'is getting on.' Lockhart, I think, never mentions it at all.

* *

A curious misprint in Scott's own text is pointed out to me by a correspondent. It is in *The Surgeon's Daughter*, not a very popular work, chapter v. p. 268, in the edition of 1829-33. 'The luxuries of a natch, and the peculiar Oriental beauty of the enchantresses who *perfumed* their voluptuous Eastern domes for the pleasure of the haughty English conquerors,' &c. Why voluptuous Eastern domes should be perfumed does not appear. Obviously, as my correspondent says, the true reading is: 'who *performed* their voluptuous Eastern dances.' An odd literary coincidence, by the way, occurs in *The Betrothed*, chapter xxiv.

Few would maintain that this scene could independently occur to two novelists. A girl is shut up in a cavern, the entrance is closed by stones which she vainly attempts to remove. Her lover, sorely wounded in a battle, lies outside, unable to reach and release her. This very scene occurs in Mr. Rider Haggard's *Nada the Lily*, where the lover is Umslopogaas, the girl is Nada. In *The Betrothed* the lover is Damian Lacy, the lady is Eveline Berenger. The natural inference is that Mr. Haggard borrowed from Scott; but the truth is that Nature plagiarised from *The Betrothed*. The event occurred in Zululand, and is described in a privately printed book by a missionary, Mr. Leslie, from which Mr. Haggard adopted the incident in his tale. In *The Betrothed* (which is new to me, like Baruch to La Fontaine) Scott seems to have been inspired by the legend of the secret room in a Scotch castle, which the heir must enter once in his life. I had previously thought that this family practice was unknown to Sir Walter, as he does not mention it in his description of the castle, where he felt so 'eerie.'

* * *

A. K. H. B.'s anecdotes in LONGMAN'S are apt to set other people anecdotising. I, too, have had a letter sent to St. Andrews, North Brunswick, through the delusive N.B. Also a letter posted in Pall Mall, and directed to 'X., 7 The Albany,' went to Albany in the United States. Or, rather, it was an article, not a letter, and had to be rewritten. Dr. Boyd's favourite town may not be worse than others, but it was profane, drunken, and ignorant about 1640, according to Principal Baillie, who visited it then. It was a Lebanon, out of which cedars were hewn for the temple of the Kirk, about 1650, as we read in the 'Life of Samuel Rutherford'; but when Dr. Chalmers came, about 1825, 'it was a mass of moral putrefaction,' as far as the students of Divinity were concerned. So what must the ordinary 'Bejant,' or Freshman, have been? Dr. Chalmers made things lively. When Assistant-Professor he called another Professor a liar, and that in the public street, and pitched into another at 'collections,' before the whole College. The men in his lecture used to applaud him vehemently when he quoted poetry, which he did often; but when a dog, which had come in, joined in the applause, the philosopher remonstrated. The golfing anecdote of the Professor who 'was tapping and damning' has been told of A. K. H. B.'s contemporaries, but it is far older, was current early

in the century, and may have been narrated about John Knox, or Andrew Melville, hundreds of years ago. There are no new anecdotes. That of the man who said, 'Then God Almighty has a very bad ear,' is told, I think, of Handel, and certainly occurs in an ancient jest-book of about 1790-1810, where I read it in my childhood, unless memory is playing one of her tricks.

* * *

What is internal evidence of style and merit worth as a criterion of authenticity in literary criticism? Not much, perhaps, as is suggested by Mr. Platt's review of Leeuwen and Costa's *Odyssey* in *The Classical Review*. Mr. Platt sees 'with surprise and dissent' that those learned Germans retain 'the greater part of the termination of the *Odyssey* as genuine.' Well done, Messrs. Leeuwen and Costa, but they might have done still better. They reject the first 204 lines in the Twenty-fourth Book, the scene in Hades, where the ghosts of the Wooers slain meet the ghosts of the heroes who fought under Troy. This they impertinently call 'the tedious trivialities of garrulous spooks' (*manium garrulorum nugas molestas*), and contrast the passage with the 'charming dialogue of the son, not yet recognised, with his sorrowful father,' in the same book. Mr. Platt thinks the second scene as bad as, or worse than, the former, and as false. But Sainte-Beuve especially praised and admired the splendid description of the funeral of Achilles, in the scene of the garrulous ghosts, while the description which Odysseus gives of his own childhood, in the second scene, is indeed a *suave colloquium*, as Leeuwen and Costa remark. 'It is mainly a question of taste in poetry,' as Mr. Platt says; but surely the taste of Sainte-Beuve (especially when it tallies with our own) is not to be despised, while Leeuwen and Costa, in the second scene, again agree with us, and differ from Mr. Platt. The picture of the child Odysseus running beside his father in the orchard, and choosing pear trees and apple trees 'for his very own,' is worthy, indeed, of Homer. This is the manner of children, 'begging for this and that,' and to remark and use the trait is the manner of Homer. Mr. Platt thinks the passage 'a bad copy' of earlier scenes of recognition, which the veriest bungler could not steal from without a little of the honey sticking to his clumsy fingers.' The honey is very excellent honey, and exactly like that which Homer habitually spreads on his *tartines* about children clinging to the mother's gown, and crying to be taken up

in her arms, as in the speech of Achilles to Patroclus, in Iliad XVI. I cannot agree with Mr. Platt that the honey is either stolen, or only second-rate marmalade. 'We ought not to condemn anything on purely subjective grounds,' says Mr. Platt; because we happen not to like, for example, what Sainte-Beuve especially admired. This is excellent advice, for really a German savant is not always an impeccable judge of merit in poetry; the chances are rather that he is not a good judge at all. *The Classical Review* is a joy to the general reader, who likes to know what is going on. Here is a member of De Pauw University (which I take to be situated in the domains of the great American Republic) charging a member of Dundee College with taking too much honey from the hives of the late Professor Frieze, of the University of Michigan. Both Michigan and Dundee have given birth to editions of Quintilian, or of books of Quintilian. Michigan came first, and Dundee is accused, by De Pauw, of 'not seeing fit, except in rare instances, to acknowledge its obligation' to Michigan. In a note to 'in rare instances,' De Pauw says, 'for example, 10. 4. 1. 10. 5. 12. 10. 7. 7.' Well, here are some instances, at all events, only given by way of example, so probably there are more. 'It is, however, pretty generally acknowledged that a literal appropriation of subject matter should receive quotation marks, and usage requires the courtesy of some acknowledgment in the case of direct adaptation of another's work.' On comparing the passages in parallel columns, one sees that the mind of Dundee has not been wholly idle, for it has added Greek to the Latin synonyms of Michigan. To a mere lay observer it may seem that neither editor could have said anything but what both did say; it is not a case of Nada the Lily stealing from the Betrothed, or of Nature pilfering from Sir Walter Scott. From this friendly discussion *The Classical Review* moves on, and shows how Roman election agents in court knew when bribed jurors 'voted square.' The method was elementary; Roman civilisation was rather backward in these matters.

Soon after we learn that the fable of Danae worked its way into the legends of Christian saints, and there is actually an older feature in the legend of St. Irene than in the story of Danae herself. Perhaps we shall next find Cinderella among the saints, or Puss in Boots aiding some early martyr. Once more we find in this delightful miscellany (far better reading than *Tit Bits*, and more deserving of popularity) a discussion as to whether St. Peter borrowed too much from earlier authorities.

The work of St. Peter is his recently discovered gospel : did he, or did he not, pilfer from Matthew, Luke, and John ? Mr. Bennett thinks that St. Peter's character is clear, that he only used the same narratives as the better known evangelists. But he does not maintain that St. Peter really was the author of the curious fragment recently published. Finally Miss Harrison explains, in the most learned way, why Zeus and Hera were on such very bad terms, also how Argos of the many eyes was the real husband of Io, while Hera is Io herself, and not her jealous rival, and he was the Sun, and she was the Moon. 'It happened long ago, and we'll hope it is not true ;' but it is curious, and shows that Hera was a goddess of dominant character long before she met her second husband, Zeus. 'Never you marry a vidder, Sammy,' Zeus's father, Cronus, might have said to him, in a spirit of prophetic reference to the elder Mr. Weller. The circumstances, then, that Hera was originally a Moon goddess in her own right, that she married Argos and had a troublesome life with him, that she acquired unruly habits and displayed them in her second *mariage de convenience* with Zeus, account for her shrewish and unamiable behaviour, as recorded by Homer. This is not exactly the way in which Miss Harrison states her argument —the early supremacy of Moon over Sun, woman over man, goddess over gods—but this is what it comes to in colloquial language. The earlier events occurred before there were any Achaeans, and when the Achaeans came, and brought Zeus, they mixed the stories up in a mass of myths, which Miss Harrison has, perhaps, disentangled. Thus we see how the scandals about the gods really arose, just like scandals about ourselves, by people taking hold, as they say, of the wrong end of the stick. When races brought in some new gods, and kept some old ones, married ones very likely, it could not be but that compromising circumstances occurred, though the gods themselves might complain of being involved in a romance dear to Miss Lydia Languish, *The Innocent Adultery*, which she thrust into *The Whole Duty of Man*, when she expected a raid of Mrs. Malaprop's. Far from blaming the gods, as used to be the fashion, we rather pity them. *Tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner.* Racine says that there was not a god but deserved to be burned. If Miss Harrison pursues her spirited and ingenious, as well as erudite, defence, they will all leave the court without a stain on their characters. I had long ago remarked that the stories of Zeus's love affairs were the result of an unhappy confusion ; he had really no more to do with those

escapades than St. Irene. And now we see why he was hen-pecked. The marriage with the widow of Argos Panoptes was a mere figment of the priesthood, while, as for courting Io, she was his wife, if she was anybody. Many unkind things have been said about the Goddess of Love, but modern research may prove her to be identical with Vesta, and an old maid of ascetic character. The new Lemprière will be a moral book, which the old Lemprière is not, but it will never inspire a Keats. A new Lucian might write a new dialogue of the gods, in which those maligned characters defend their own reputations from the aspersions of poets. If the Heathen Apologists had only known what Miss Harrison knows, they could have effectually refuted Clemens Alexandrinus and the Fathers in general. We might still have been worshipping Zeus and the rest. The worst of it is that, when once you take the wicked old stories away, there is so very little left, scarcely enough of a heathen god to swear by.

* * *

Scotch correspondents are still sending in answers, wildly wrong, about the battle concerning which a question was asked in these pages some months ago. They are never by any accident right, and the prize went to Yorkshire.

* * *

OFF MY GAME.

'I'm off my game,' the golfer said,
And shook his locks in woe;
'My putter never lays me dead,
My drives will never go;
Howe'er I swing, howe'er I stand,
Results are still the same,
I'm in the burn, I'm in the sand—
I'm off my game !

'Oh, would that such mishap might fall
On Laidlay or Macfie,
That they might toe or heel the ball,
And scلاف along like me !
Men hurry from me in the street,
And execrate my name,
Old partners shun me when we meet—
I'm off my game !

AT THE SIGN OF THE SHIP.

' Why is it that I play at all?
Let memory remind me
How once I smote upon my ball,
And bunkered it—*behind me*.¹
I mostly slice into the whins,
And my excuse is lame—
It cannot cover half my sins—
I'm off my game !

' I hate the sight of all my set,
I grow morose as Byron ;
I never loved a brassey yet,
And now I hate an iron.
My cleek seems merely made to top,
My putting's wild or tame ;
It's really time for me to stop—
I'm off my game !'

A. LANG.

¹ A fact.

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For the 'DONNA acknowledgments and the NOTICE TO CORRESPONDENTS
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THE 'DONNA.'

The 'Donna.'

THE EDITOR begs to acknowledge the receipt of the following amounts. Contributions received after March 11 will be acknowledged in the May number:—

A reader of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE, Night Refuge, 10s. Three friends at Surbiton 3s. 6d. M. F. N., Workroom, 5s. Officers of H.M.S. *Trafalgar* 2l. In memory of H. B. 5l. of H. E. B. 5l. of C. L. B. 5l. Ella L. Cunliffe 2s. 6d. Miss Freer, Night Refuge, 2l., Workroom 2l. C. M., Edinburgh, 2s. 6d. E. M. E. 4s. 6d. V. M. K. 5s. P. 1l. A reader LONGMAN'S 1l. Mrs. Lindsay, Donna, 3l., Night Refuge 2l. C. H. W., Turleigh, 2s. 6d. Mrs. Hubbard 10s. A Friend 2s. 6d. Jacky 2s., and mufflers. Anon., Night Refuge, 5s., also J. B., Portrush, cuffs and socks. Coco 12 mufflers, and Miss Potter and Miss M. Potter 3 scarves. Miss Chandler pair of socks. Miss Macduff, Donna, 10s., Night Refuge, 10s. Mrs. Edgar Graham 10s. 6d. Lucas Thomasson, Donna, 3l. 10s., Night Refuge, 3l. 10s., Workroom, 3l. Mrs. Gordon C. Fowler, Donna, 5s., Night Refuge, 5s., Workroom, 10s. G. B. 10s. Miss Young 10s.

Miss Trench acknowledges gratefully 10l. from Mrs. London, to provide knitting at the workrooms; the knitted articles to be sent to the Deep Sea Fishermen. 2s. 6d. from Mrs. Alexander Graham for Night Refuge.

The Sisters have received the following direct:—Miss Syers, Workroom, 2s. 'F. B.' 3 pairs socks, newspapers. Lady Mabel M. Lindsay, Workroom, 5l. Mrs. Arnold Thomas socks, men's shirts, coat. 'Monica' 13 pairs socks, 3 pairs stockings, 1 vest. Mrs. Peachey 4 vests, 1 dress. Mrs. F. Bird's little boys 6 scarves. Miss Thornton underclothing and comforter. Miss J. Banner men's clothes. 'S. Liverpool' 3 pairs socks, 2 scrap-books. 84 Abbey Road men's clothes. Mr. J. Pass men's clothes. Miss Florence Wrey 29 garments. Mrs. Wooldridge woollies, socks. Dr. Kerr, M.D., 4 overcoats. 'Anon.' men's clothes, boots, macintosh, &c. Per 'Secretary' D. K. S., Pulham S. Mary, Norfolk, 12 pairs socks, 2 pairs gloves, 23 pairs cuffs, 23 mufflers, 6 pairs mittens, 2 shirts, 6 pairs small cuffs, 1 pair trousers. 'Rose' 1s. Miss Wilson 2s. 'N. P.' 1s.

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The Editor requests that his correspondents will be good enough to write to him informing him of the subject of any article they wish to offer, before sending the MS. A stamped and addressed envelope should accompany the MS. if the writer wishes it to be returned in case of non-acceptance. The Editor can in no case hold himself responsible for accidental loss. All communications should be addressed to

*The Editor of LONGMAN'S MAGAZINE,
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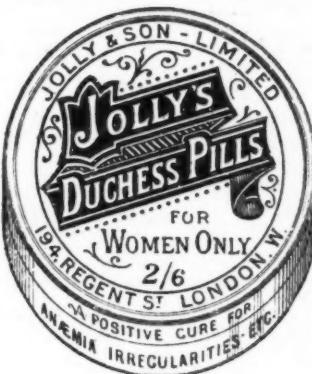
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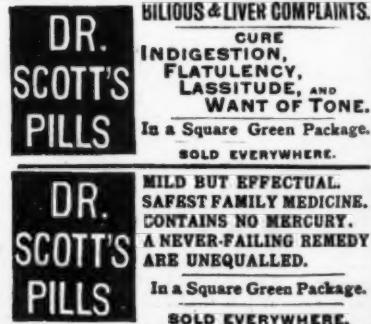
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